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# Green Stockings

BY  
A. E. W. MASON



SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York



# GREEN STOCKINGS

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY

A. E. W. MASON

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*Act of March 4, 1909.*



## “GREEN STOCKINGS”

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### DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS.

**ADMIRAL GRICE.** (Retired) A testy old gentleman of about 65, with the manner of an old sea dog, of ruddy complexion, with white hair and whiskers.

**WILLIAM FARADAY.** A well preserved man of about 65. Fashionable, superficial and thoroughly selfish.

**COLONEL SMITH.** A dignified, dryly humorous man of military bearing, about 40 years old.

**ROBERT TARVER.** An empty headed young swell.

**HENRY STEELE and JAMES RALEIGH.** Two young men of about 30 and 35 respectively.

**MARTIN.** A dignified old family servant.

**CELIA FARADAY.** An unaffected woman of 29, with a sense of humor.

**MADGE (MRS. ROCKINGHAM) and EVELYN (LADY TRENCHARD).** Handsome, well-dressed, fashionable women of 25 and 27 respectively.

**PHYLLIS.** The youngest sister, a charming and pretty, but thoughtlessly selfish girl of 20.

**MRS. CHISOLM FARADAY, of Chicago. (AUNT IDA)** A florid, quick-tempered, warm-hearted woman of 50 or thereabouts.

**ACT I.** Room in Mr. Faraday's House, February 11th,—— Evening.

**ACT II.** Same as Act I. Eight months later. About 6 o'clock.

**ACT III.** Morning room in Mr. Faraday's house. Evening, same day.

## LIGHT PLOT.

## ACT I.

*At rise, footlights and first border white and amber full up. Four table lamps on stage alight. In card room U. L. chandelier; and amber bunch off.*

*In morning room U. R. lamp on table; and amber bunch off.*

*At exit of PHYLLIS and EVELYN on cue "I think they do"—from PHYLLIS, PHYLLIS switches off lights U. R. and EVELYN puts out lamp in morning room. All lamps go out leaving only chandelier in card room alight. First border to one quarter. White foots out and amber foots to one quarter. When EVELYN puts out lamp in morning room, put out bunch in same.*

*When CELIA turns up switch on cue "Oh, it's you, Aunt Ida," all lights on stage full up as before except bunch and lamp in morning room.*

*Electric switch U. R. on set to R. morning room door.*

*Bell push U. L. C. to R. card room door.*

*Amber No. 32 in fire-place on knife switch to be flickered when CELIA throws letters and army list into fire.*

*Red bunch in fire-place.*

## ACT II.

*Amber bunch in room R. Light amber on backing card room. Red glow from fire-place. On cue "other fish in the sea" from GRICE, amber on backing, changing to dark amber very slowly and then out. On cue "Ready, Celia, ready" from FARADAY, comes up slowly to moonlight blue. When amber change is made on backing foots and borders down about 5 points. When PHYLLIS lights lamp on table R. C. on cue "Oh, there's a message"—foots and borders full up as before.*

## ACT III.

*Foots and first border full up amber and white. Blue bunch in conservatory left. Blue bunch and moonlight spots in window R.*

*Spot to be directed on chair left of upper doors. Red glow up and off R. to suggest fire as in Act I. Also amber No. 32 as before to be flickered when SMITH "burns" Army List.*

*Two candles on table C. lighted. On cue—"Damn, Wobbles, I am going because"—from COL. SMITH, white third border full up a moment after EVELYN exits put third border out. On cue—"Then let me sit like this in the dark" from CELIA,—CELIA switches off light U. L. All lights on stage out, except red glow and lights on backing and blue spot on CELIA. On cue—"Army Lists don't burn so suddenly as that"—from CELIA, AUNT IDA turns up switch, lights full up as before.*

*Bell push U. L. C. L. of center doors light switch to L. of this.*

## PROPERTY PLOT.

## SET PROPERTIES ACT I.

A medium-sized table L., on it, a book slide containing books and Army list, lamp, sewing bag, silver purse containing coin money.

To right of table, arm-chair with cushion.

At head of table, a single chair.

Left of table, a single chair.

Cabinet above door L. against wall, on it, a vase of flowers, photograph frames.

A small grand piano at back with drapery, on it, lamp, bowl of flowers, some photograph frames.

Long narrow table right, an arm-chair with small cushion to L. of it.

Waste paper basket under it.

Stool below it. On it, a table cover, English periodicals at each end, railway guide at upper end, a lamp, silver cigarette box, a paper knife, letters, vase of tulips, calendar, match holder, ash tray.

R. table a large sofa with cushions.

Against fire-place, large mantel, on it, three vases.

Against mantel, a club fender.

Below mantel, arm-chair.

A small writing table U. R., on it, small lamp, a small vase of flowers, blotting pad containing pens, ink, paper and envelopes.

In card room U. L., card table and four chairs.

On table, two packs of cards, pencils, bridge markers, ash tray.

In morning room, small table, two chairs.

On table, lamp, ash tray, match holder, vase of flowers.

## ACT II.

Same as Act I, and table L. C., and chairs moved to C. R., nearer center.

On it, tea tray laid for five people, plum cake on plate.

Arm-chair moved to L. of table and plain chair moved to R. of table.

Muffin stand placed lower end of cabinet.

On it, muffins, cakes, etc.

Throat spray behind vase on table R. C., for PHYLLIS.

Remove waste paper basket.

Embroidery on table R. C., for PHYLLIS.

Election address on cabinet L., for TARVER.

Close table in card-room—rearrange chairs and draw curtains.

Replace all flowers with autumn flowers.

## ACT III.

A small round dinner table center, two chairs R. and L. of it.

On table, lace cloth. Candles and flowers at back. In center, basket of fruit, almond dish with burnt almonds, large silver cigarette box, silver cigarette lighter, two ash trays, plates and finger-bowls, fruit knives and forks, napkins, nut crackers.

A small sewing-table U. R.

To R. of it, a high-backed winged arm-chair.

L. of it, a square arm-chair.

On table, a lamp.

R. of center doors a small table, on it, silver serving tray, small tray with brandy decanter, two liquor glasses, desk and chair L.

On desk, pens, ink, paper and envelopes.

Couch with cushions L. desk.

China closets in first L. flat containing bric-à-brac.

In conservatory palms and flowers.

L. of center doors—chair.

In room U. C. off stage cabinet of Act I—table and arm-chair.

On table book-rack with army list as seen in Act II.

## HAND PROPERTIES OFF STAGE.

## ACT I.

Off R. 3, cigars for FARADAY and ADMIRAL. Coins for RALEIGH. Off L. 1, oilskin coat, and hat, and travelling bag (all wet) for CELIA.

## ACT II.

Off R. 3, tonic bottle for TARVER. Clothes-brush for TARVER. Off L. 1, English Times and periodical with mailing wrapper on it—on salver for MARTIN.

Two boxes wrapped in tissue paper for CELIA. Card on salver for MARTIN. Pin and large heavy-faced open watch and chain and cigarette case for COL. SMITH. Army list on salver for MARTIN. Off R. 3, atlas for TARVER. (Set of chimes and door-bell off L.)

### ACT III.

Off R. 1, tray with coffee-pot, two demi-tasse, and sugar bowl and one cigarette, for MARTIN. Smart motor wrap, muff, bonnet, and traveling bag belonging to CELIA. Large heavy ulster, furs, and bonnet (for AUNT IDA) (for MARTIN.) Large covered box tied with pink ribbon and small box supposed to contain watch and pin for CELIA. Army list partly burnt, in tongs, off R. 3, for CELIA.

# “GREEN STOCKINGS”

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## ACT I.

SCENE:—A room in MR. FARADAY'S country house; at the upper left corner, a little room is recessed, in which is a folding card table and four chairs. Windows at back. On table are two decks of cards, an ash tray and two bridge markers and pencils. Hanging over table, a shaded electrolier. There is no door, but people sitting at the card table are practically off the stage, though they can be seen and heard. At right corner balancing left corner exactly is seen a portion of the morning room (backing used is part of 3 Act set) directly against back is a small table, between two chairs, both of which are facing it. On table, a lighted lamp and an English periodical, also an ash tray and a vase of spring flowers. Note: All flowers used in this set are spring flowers. Between card room and morning room on back flat, a tapestry is hung, against flat a Baby Grand piano, key-board facing right up and down stage; on piano are a scarf, photograph frames, vase of flowers and a lamp. In the center of the left wall of the room proper is hung a large picture; beneath this stands a large cabinet on which is formal garniture. Below this is a door (L. 1) which leads into the hall; above door and to left center, a table on which is a sliding book rack, holding several books and

*an English army list (see illustration) Also a shaded lamp, a purse for LADY TRENCHARD to left of table, and a sewing bag for AUNT IDA to right of table.*

*In R. 1 is a door balancing that in L. 1. It leads to hall. Above door R. is a large mantle. Above this is hung a large picture, balancing that on left wall. On mantle, a formal garniture of vases; against mantle, a club fender with upholstered top, fire irons inside fender, grate with lighted coal fire; below fender, facing sofa, an arm-chair. Opposite and facing the fender and about three feet from it is a large comfortable sofa, with a number of cushions; against the back of this, a long magazine table. On this are, beginning at upper end, an English timetable, a large shaded lamp, large cigarette box containing cigarettes, ash tray, match holder, vase of tulips, photo frame, and at extreme lower end of table seven or eight English periodicals. On these, a large blue linen envelope, unsealed, flap being turned in. This contains a few spring fashion plates. With this are four ordinary letters, containing circulars (all of these letters are important). Below table, a square tapestry stool, left of table an arm-chair, under table a waste paper basket. Between piano and entrance to morning room is a small light writing table. On this, a small lamp or a pair of shaded candles, a blotting pad with paper, envelopes, ink and pens. Above this a chair. Off L. a door bell and set of chimes. Electric light switch on R. wall to R. of morning room opening. Bell push on L. of back flat. The entire room should convey the impression of quiet, dignified, tasteful elegance. Complete darkness at windows, suggesting a rainy night. On rise of curtain, all lamps are lighted and fire aglow.*

*Before curtain rises, Phyllis plays for a mo-*



ment or two; at rise discovered:—Phyllis at piano playing. LADY TRENCHARD seated at upper end of sofa, smoking a cigarette and reading a periodical. MADGE writing a letter at writing table up stage. AUNT IDA seated in arm-chair at R. of table L. knitting. The girls and AUNT IDA are in evening dress. Phyllis continues to play softly under conversation, something cheerful but not too fast. The opening scene should be played brightly and quickly.

MADGE. (*Rises. Brightly*) Oh, Evelyn—

EVELYN. Yes, Madge.

MADGE. (*Coming down to chair L. of table R. with letter in hand*) I do want this letter to my husband to catch the Indian mail. Do you know anything about the postal service in this benighted village?

EVELYN. (*Continuing to read and speaking over her magazine*) No, Madgie, I don't, Celia always attends to those things—*She's away.* Ring for Martin.

(MADGE goes to bell in upper flat L. rings it, and then comes L. C.)

AUNT IDA. (*Without looking up from her knitting*) Has anyone gone to the wharf to meet Celia?

EVELYN. (*Indifferently*) Why, no, she's coming home to-night, isn't she?

AUNT IDA. (*Vehemently*) You got her telegram.

MADGE. (*Unconcerned*) What time is her boat due?

AUNT IDA. At eight, and now it's nearly nine.

(*Enter MARTIN R. 1 E. and stands*)

AUNT IDA. (*Continuing*) She'll have been waiting for an hour on that dreadful wharf.

EVELYN. (*Still reading and speaking over her*

*book*) Oh, Martin, the motor must go at once to the wharf to fetch Miss Celia.

MARTIN. Yes, Your Ladyship, but hadn't I better send down some extra wraps, it's a very wet night.

EVELYN. (*Looking up for a moment*) Wet? Dear me, is it raining?

AUNT IDA. Cats and dogs.

EVELYN. (*Returning to her reading*) Oh, very well, then, Martin, attend to it at once.

MARTIN. (*Turns to go to door R.*) Yes, your Ladyship.

MADGE. (*From L. C.*) Attend to *me* first, Martin, if you please.

MARTIN. (*Turns back*) Yes, Madam.

MADGE. How late can I post in order to catch the the Indian mail?

MARTIN. Up till 10 o'clock, Madam.

MADGE. (*Going back to desk*) Oh, then I have time to write a longer letter.

(MARTIN *exits R. 1.*)

AUNT IDA. (*Looking around at girls, who are all occupied and quite oblivious of CELIA'S discomfort. With a deep sigh and shaking her head*) Poor Celia.

PHYLLIS (*Gives a slight bang on the piano, rises and comes quickly down center. Indignantly*) Poor Celia. Well, she's coming back home, just at a moment that's going to complicate—the—whole—situation.

EVELYN. Why, what do you mean?

PHYLLIS. (*Addressing EVELYN*) Well, you know how father feels about letting *me* get married—While Celia is settling down day after day into a permanent old maid—If she'd stayed away a little longer, he might forget for a while, but here she's turning up just *this very night*, just as Bobby has gained courage enough to take the bull by the horns and beard the lion sulking in his tent.

(Enter TARVER in evening dress, dejectedly, R. U. coming down center.)

AUNT IDA. What an extraordinary proceeding.

PHYLLIS. (*Running up to BOBBY and taking him by the arm*) Oh! Bobby, Bobby! What news?

TARVER. Well, I'm afraid its hopeless, though I spoke with singular force. (*Sits in chair Left of Table R*)

PHYLLIS. (*Stands L. of Chair L. of Table R.*) Oh, Bobby, how splendid of you! How did you put it?

TARVER. In the form of a question. I said to your father, "Are you aware, Sir, that I love your daughter and wish to make her mine?"

EVELYN. What did *Father* say?

TARVER. Oh, he said, "Has it escaped your observation, Sir, that I still have *two* marriageable daughters?"

PHYLLIS. (*Protestingly*) But he hasn't, he hasn't.

AUNT IDA. Eh?

PHYLLIS. You know what I mean, Aunt Ida. *I'm* marriageable, but *Celia*—well—*Celia's* just—*unmarried*.

EVELYN. (*With smiling sarcasm*) And very likely to stay so.

AUNT IDA. (*Grunts*) Huh!

TARVER. That's just it, but tell me, what is your father's dearest wish in life?

PHYLLIS. To get rid of us *both*, of course.

AUNT IDA. *Phyllis Faraday!*

EVELYN. (*Putting magazine on sofa and putting out cigarette on ash tray*) Yes, so that he can give up this house to live at his club, but he promised poor mother to wait till we were all married—

TARVER. Yes, and he knows there's a better chance of getting *Celia* off his hands as long as *Phyllis* is about, because people will go on talking of her and

Celia as the two Faraday *girls*, and lumping good old Celia into the girl division just out of habit. He won't risk letting Miss Celia put on a third pair of green stockings. (TARVER looks around for ash tray, sees one on upper end of table, rises, goes to upper end of table, flicks ashes on tray and strolls down right of sofa and sits lower end of fender)

AUNT IDA. Eh. Will you tell me what all this has to do with Celia's stockings?

(PHYLLIS sits in chair L. of table R.)

EVELYN. (Rising leisurely, going to lower end of table, taking her fan and crossing to AUNT IDA, speaking as she goes) Not Celia's stockings, Aunt Ida, her green stockings.

AUNT IDA. Eh?

EVELYN. Why, yes. Have you never known of the old country custom which requires an *elder* sister to wear green stockings at the wedding of her *younger* sister, if that *younger* sister has captured a husband first?

AUNT IDA. (Turning her back to EVELYN with disgust) No, I never heard of such rubbish.

EVELYN. (Patronizingly) (Crossing to head of table R. and speaking as she crosses) And poor old Celia has had to put them on twice already. Once for Madge and once for me and now comes Phyllis. (Puts her hand on PHYLLIS'S shoulder)

PHYLLIS. And if I have to wait to be married until Celia is out of the way—(Sighs. EVELYN moves above table and down R. of sofa) Oh, couldn't we think of anybody who *might* marry Celia? Evelyn, do you think you could do anything about it with Henry Steele or Jimmie Raleigh?

TARVER. (With a brilliant inspiration) If it comes to that, why shouldn't Admiral Grice be got to marry Miss Celia? (Everybody exclaims and throws up their hands in horror).

(EVELYN sits on sofa)

PHYLLIS. (*Horried*) Oh, Bobby.

TARVER. Yes, Grice. (*Thoughtfully, strolling center below table*) Isn't half a bad idea, come to think of it. I'd like to get even with Grice. (AUNT IDA gives a grunt of disgust) The way he keeps roaring questions at me all day about my election, and neither he nor Miss Celia are what you might call—in the first bloom of their youth.

AUNT IDA. (*Interrupting sharply*) Mr. Tarver, my niece, Miss Celia Faraday, is a dear, delightful young woman, still under thirty.

EVELYN. (*Again with smiling sarcasm*) Yes, but how much under, Aunt Ida?

TARVER. Yes, as Lady Trenchard says, how much is Miss Celia Faraday under thirty? Thirty-two is freezing point, remember.

(PHYLLIS laughs)

AUNT IDA. Tcha. (*Picks up knitting and goes on with it angrily*)

TARVER. (*Chuckling to himself and strolling right to foot of table*) Jimmie Raleigh said a very true thing about her. He said, "Whenever I talk to Miss Faraday, I'm warranted to stay cold for days—like a Thermos bottle. (*Sits on stool*)

PHYLLIS. Oh, Bobby.

AUNT IDA. Oh, Mr. Tarver. (*Smiling with suppressed fury*) I should like to have you in Chicago for a week.

TARVER. (*Taking her seriously*) Oh, thanks awfully. I dare say some day, after my election, I shall have to look up America. Just at present, though, I have too much on my mind.

AUNT IDA. Shouldn't overburden the weak, Mr. Tarver.

PHYLLIS. (*Showing resentment*) Oh, Aunt Ida!

(EVELYN laughs)

TARVER. (*Rises, gives AUNT IDA a resentful look, turns up R. by fender and addresses EVELYN*) But the great thing now is to get old Grice to propose to Miss Celia.

EVELYN. (*Very patronizingly*) Why, yes, Bobby, then out of gratitude she might go out and canvass for you.

TARVER. (*Doubtfully*) Ye-es, that would be very nice, of course (*Rises enthusiastically*) but fascinating girls are what is needed at a time like this, like you, Lady Trenchard, and Phyllis and Mrs. Rockingham. (*He bows to each as he addresses them. Going up to MADGE at desk R.*) I say, when is your husband coming back from India?

MADGE. Not till Christmas. (*Rises*)

TARVER. Then you can spend all your time canvassing for me, can't you?

MADGE. (*Patronizingly*) Oh, of course, Bobby.

TARVER. (*Crossing L. to C.*) Thanks awfully. And you two girls can do the same. But your sister—well—

(MADGE comes to head of magazine table.)

AUNT IDA. (*Turning on him quickly*) Well, what, Mr. Tarver?

TARVER. (*Very diffidently*) Well I'm afraid she wouldn't be of much use—you see she's rather difficult—isn't she?

AUNT IDA. Difficult!

TARVER. (*Seeing he has made a break, tries to recover himself*) Well, not quite the sort of person to make friends for one, don't you know?

AUNT IDA. (*Growing more and more enraged, rises and faces him*) Mr. Tarver!

TARVER. (*Now thoroughly frightened*) Well, shall we say a,—a—trifle cold?

AUNT IDA. (*Backing him across stage to foot of*

table R.) Yes, and who has made her a trifle cold (*Imitating* TARVER) and difficult? You and your Henry Steeles and Jimmy Raleighs.

ALL THE GIRLS TOGETHER. Aunt Ida!

TARVER. Oh, I say!

AUNT IDA. Yes, where is she now, I would like to know? Freezing for an hour on an open wharf in the pouring rain three miles away, because nobody took the trouble to think of her.

MADGE. (*Coming center. Protestingly*) Oh, Aunt Ida, I heard the motor leave not *two minutes* ago.

AUNT IDA. Yes, just about two hours too late. (*MADGE goes above table and joins girls, who with TARVER are evidently alarmed under AUNT IDA'S attack and express it in a murmur. TARVER sits*) Oh, if only she doesn't get tired of waiting before the motor can get there.

TARVER. (*To girls*) Don't worry. Don't worry. Why should she get tired? It would look like a lack of confidence in you if she stopped waiting.

AUNT IDA. Yes, and Celia is certainly accustomed to waiting for and on every one of you.

GIRLS and TARVER. Now, you know,—Oh, I say.

(*MADGE turns up to piano.*)

AUNT IDA. (*Continuing*) She is a back number. That's your constant suggestion, and because she hasn't found a Jim Raleigh to love her, she is on the shelf—(*Disgustedly*) a Jim Raleigh.

(*TARVER and PHYLLIS rise and she consoles him.*)

RALEIGH. (*Entering gayly through morning room*) Hello, what's that about me? (*Goes directly to AUNT IDA. They turn to table L.*)

(*AUNT IDA flustered and exclaiming. Immediately*

*following RALEIGH are FARADAY, GRICE and STEELE in the foregoing order. They are chatting and smoking and are all in evening dress.)*

FARADAY. (*Cheerily*) You don't mind, girls, if we bring in our cigars?

MADGE and EVELYN. Not at all, Father.

(FARADAY crosses immediately to card table and looks it over.)

GRICE. (*Coming down R. of sofa. Gruffly to TARVER*) Tarver, I want to ask you a question.

TARVER. (*Going reluctantly to him*) Yes, sir.

(PHYLLIS looks reproachfully at GRICE and sits again in chair L. of table R., swinging her foot and watching TARVER and GRICE. STEELE goes to head of sofa and talks with LADY TRENCHARD. MADGE remains by piano, turning over music. RALEIGH crosses to left of table, above table, still talking to AUNT IDA. All of this business occurs almost simultaneously and quickly.)

FARADAY. (*Coming out of card room. Irritably*) Madge, where are those new markers?

MADGE. I don't know, Father. Celia attends to everything.

FARADAY. (*Coming down center. Testily*) Well, God bless my soul, where is Celia?

(MADGE gradually comes down C., R. of FARADAY.)

AUNT IDA. (*Facing him. Vehemently*) God bless your soul, William Faraday, down on the wharf in the pouring rain——

FARADAY. What's that?

AUNT IDA. (*Continuing*) Frozen to death by this time.

FARADAY. God bless my soul!



AUNT IDA. (*Continuing*) For all any one cares.  
 FARADAY. But I need her. She must be sent  
 for at once.

(*Door opens suddenly. CELIA in dripping oil skins  
 and drenched veil, carrying a soaking wet travel-  
 ing bag, enters and crosses immediately from  
 L. 1 E. to R. 1. All give start of surprise.*)

OMNES. Celia! Miss Faraday—etc.

AUNT IDA. Darling!

MADGE. (*As CELIA gets center. Coming down  
 center*) We did send the motor for you, Celia, only  
 it was too late.

CELIA. (*Pausing at door*) Yes, I know, Madgie,  
 but when I met him, he wouldn't stop. He took  
 me for the fish-monger—(*Exit quickly R. 1 E.*)

FARADAY. Fish-monger! God bless my soul!

MADGE. (*Idiotically to girls*) She must have  
 walked.

EVELYN and PHYLLIS. Why, yes.

AUNT IDA. Well, she could hardly sleep on the  
 wharf, could she?

GRICE. (*To STEELE*) What an unfortunate way  
 that poor woman has of doing things that make  
 everyone feel uncomfortable.

STEELE. (*To GRICE*) Yes, the idea of her walk-  
 ing up here alone in the rain!

EVELYN. (*To girls*) Wherever did she get the  
 clothes?

CELIA. (*Off stage*) Martin, send to the station at  
 once for my hat and coat and return these things  
 to Wilson. He borrowed them from the pilot.

GRICE. Wilson?

EVELYN. (*Patronizingly*) He is the man at the  
 station. *He's Celia's slave.*

(*CELIA re-enters without oil skins and stands at door,  
 R. She is in a simple traveling dress.*)

FARADAY. (*From center of stage*) God bless my soul, Celia, where have you been?

CELIA. Why, I've been away, Father, for a week. Perhaps you haven't noticed it.

FARADAY. Not noticed it? I have missed you very much. I never get all the right things for breakfast when you're away!

CELIA. Sorry, Father. (*CELIA crosses quickly to AUNT IDA, who is in the center of the stage, FARADAY having turned and gone up into the card room. CELIA nodding as she crosses, to the ADMIRAL and the girls*) Good evening, Admiral. Well, girls.

(*ADMIRAL acknowledges her greeting with a grunt, STEELE with a stiff bow, and the girls say, "Good evening, Celia."*)

CELIA. Well, Aunt Ida.

AUNT IDA. (*Kissing her on both cheeks*) Dear child!

(*CELIA passing L. over to MR. RALEIGH, who is left of table L. CELIA offers him her hand, which he takes with a very bored air. Meanwhile, the groups break up after CELIA has passed. LADY TRENCHARD joins the ADMIRAL and STEELE at upper end of sofa. PHYLLIS joins TARVER; they sit at lower end of fender, PHYLLIS sitting in chair below fender. AUNT IDA joins MADGE and they all talk in dumb show during CELIA's scene with RALEIGH.*)

CELIA. Mr. Raleigh, how are you?

RALEIGH. I am very well, thank you. (*Pause*) Yes.

CELIA. Yes?

RALEIGH. (*In a bored monotone, looking straight in front of him*) Yes. I hope you enjoyed yourself, Miss Faraday. You were in London?

CELIA. No, at Southampton.

RALEIGH. Oh, yes—er—all amongst the ships and things.

CELIA. Yes.

RALEIGH. Yes.

CELIA. Won't you sit down, Mr. Raleigh?

RALEIGH. No thanks. I never sit down.

CELIA. Eh?

RALEIGH. After dinner.

CELIA. Oh.

RALEIGH. You have been away quite a long time, Miss Faraday?

CELIA. Yes, for me.

RALEIGH. Yes, I mean for you. Well—nothing much has happened.

CELIA. Well, one hardly expects much, does one?

RALEIGH. No. Oh, Manners has got himself engaged.

CELIA. Really? To Jennie Woodcote, I suppose?

RALEIGH. Yes; they were all saying it was her last chance.

CELIA. Yes, they would.

RALEIGH. Of course, that's all nonsense. Nowadays, there's no—a——

CELIA. Age limit?

RALEIGH. Exactly! (*Then catching himself up in great confusion*) No, no, Good Lord, no! I didn't mean——

FARADAY. (*Coming forward L. C.*) Well, we might as well have some bridge. (*Murmurs of "Oh, splendid"*)

RALEIGH. (*With a shout of relief backs away from CELIA toward card room*) Bridge, oh splendid!

(EVELYN and STEELE go slowly to card room.  
TARVER starts L.)

GRICE. (*Quickly*) Tarver, I have another question to ask you.

TARVER. (*To FARADAY, enthusiastically*) Admiral Grice plays a ripping game.

FARADAY. (*Gayly*) Come along, Admiral. Come along.

GRICE. (*Crossing left. FARADAY takes him by the arm. They go up to card room together, chatting gayly*) Not bad. Not bad.

(*These last few lines are played very quickly. CELIA has remained in chair R. of L. table after RALEIGH has gone to card room. AUNT IDA and MADGE are standing up stage and those who have gone into the card room seat themselves in the following fashion, after the settling of partners in dumb show. RALEIGH is seated down stage, his back to the audience, LADY TRENCHARD to his right, FARADAY to his left, and ADMIRAL GRICE opposite him. They begin their game of bridge. TARVER has gone up R. of sofa, getting a cigarette at head of table. PHYLLIS throws herself lightly on the sofa on her knees, gathering up CELIA'S letters and flourishing them at her.*)

PHYLLIS. Celia, here are some letters for you.

CELIA. (*Crossing to chair L. of table R. and sitting*) Letters for me?

PHYLLIS. One is a big one. (*Gives CELIA letters, kneeling on sofa*)

CELIA. I don't suppose any of them are very important.

PHYLLIS. (*Pityingly*) No, I don't suppose so.

CELIA. (*Looking at letters*) Circulars. Circulars. (*Tears open one envelope and takes out circular letter. Then seeing big envelope, says brightly as she picks it up and draws out fashion plates*) Oh, spring fashions.

PHYLLIS. (*With an air of superiority*) Oh, you don't want those. Give them to me.

(*CELIA* *submissively* hands them over, leaving large blue envelope on table. *PHYLLIS* takes them and sits on sofa with *TARVER*, who has come down after lighting his cigarette. They hold hands, backs to *CELIA*, looking at fashions.)

*CELIA*. (*Reading letter that she has opened*)  
 “Dear Sir or Madam: Having secured our unparalleled stock of sherry wine on a falling market—”  
 (*Drops envelope and opens another. Reads*)  
 “Dear Madam: You are cordially invited to attend our spring opening of household linens——”

*FARADAY*. (*Coming from card room*) Madge, you will play?

*MADGE*. No thanks, I'll finish my letter. (*Who has been talking to AUNT IDA, goes back to writing table up R. and resumes writing*)

*FARADAY*. (*Disappointedly*) And Phyllis doesn't.

*AUNT IDA*. Well, there's Celia.

*FARADAY*. (*Coming down to CELIA*) God bless my soul! Of course, why did I forget?

*CELIA*. Oh—that's all right, Father. (*Cheerfully opening her letters*) It's being done, you know.

*FARADAY*. (*To TARVER and PHYLLIS, who are seated on sofa, holding hands*) Now, then, you two, none of that! No holding hands! (*They rise quickly, looking embarrassed and facing father*) You are not engaged yet, you know.

*CELIA*. (*Happily*) Engaged? Phyllis and Mr. Tarver?

*FARADAY*. (*Reassuringly*) No, no, certainly not. Nothing of the kind. Cheer up, my dear. (*Patting CELIA on the shoulder*) You don't suppose I would allow a chick like *Phyllis* to marry with you on my hands still?

*AUNT IDA*. (*Who has been watching him and listening to him*). William! (*She takes him by the arm and they go up to the card room together*)

(*There are now in the card room GRICE, FARADAY, STEELE, RALEIGH, LADY TRENCHARD and AUNT IDA. AUNT IDA is out of sight. RALEIGH, LADY TRENCHARD, GRICE and FARADAY are playing. STEELE is circulating about above table. TARVER goes up in the morning room, sits left of table, and reads a magazine. CELIA rises and goes to PHYLLIS, who meets her below sofa.*)

CELIA. Phyllis——?

PHYLLIS. (*Eagerly*) Oh, Celia, you don't really mind, do you? Just because *you can't*—I mean, because you *don't want to*—get married, you won't try to stop Bobby and me, will you?

CELIA. (*In a hurt tone*) Phyllis—dear——

PHYLLIS. (*Relieved*) I knew you wouldn't. I told Bobby——!

CELIA. And do you mean to say that Mr. Tarver—(*Controlling herself with effort*) Phyllis, dear—You ought to know—by now—there isn't anything I wouldn't do to make my littlest sister happy. (*Patting PHYLLIS on cheek*)

PHYLLIS. (*Carelessly engrossed in her own affairs*) Oh, of course, I know that. But, Celia, you're quite mistaken and unjust about poor Bobby.

CELIA. (*Smiling, rather bitterly*) Oh—I hope not, Phyllis. I—can't stand—injustice!

PHYLLIS. (*Kneeling on stool R. C.*) *But you are!* In spite of all his worries and preoccupations about his election, Bobby takes the *greatest interest* in you, Celia——

CELIA. (*Crosses C. Smiles ironically*) Yes?

PHYLLIS. I tell you *he does!* (*Forgetting herself in her zeal*) As soon as he has time, Bobby means to do everything he can to get *Admiral Grice to propose to you!*

CELIA. (*Recoiling*) What!!

PHYLLIS. (*Crestfallen*) Oh—I oughtn't to have told you, I suppose. But it's *true*, all the same. (*Re-*

*proachfully*) You don't appreciate Bobby's *noble nature*, Celia. You don't know how Bobby realizes your—your *loneliness*, Celia. Unless you could hear him talk about you, you'd never guess how much darling Bobby *pities* you.

CELIA. (*In a changed voice*) Phyllis. One moment, please—(*With an effort at calm*) Do you mean to say that you and—and Mr. Tarver have been—been discussing—me—? Oh! (*Clenching her handkerchief*)

PHYLLIS. Not *discussing*—(*Self-righteously*) Bobby *would not discuss* anybody. But—you see, Celia, we were all—Aunt Ida and all of us—talking, just in fun, about your having to wear Green Stockings once more at my wedding, and Bobby—(*Laughs to herself*) Darling Bobby, *is so witty*—!

CELIA. Oh, yes—Go on, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS. (*Injured*) Well, but he is.

CELIA. Oh yes—yes—

PHYLLIS. And so Bobby was just being most awfully *sweet* and *sympathetic* about your—your *position*.

CELIA. My *position*—! (*Between her teeth*) My—*position*! And so Mr. Robert Tarver was kind enough to express concern, was he—because there was no possible chance of any decent man ever wanting to marry me?

PHYLLIS. (*Half frightened*) Oh, Celia! (*Rises*)

CELIA. And he makes jokes about my stockings. (*Goes L. to chair R. of table L. and stands beside it*) I can hear his jokes!

PHYLLIS. Oh, Celia! Bobby *is* witty.

CELIA. (*Ironically*) Yes, very.

FARADAY. (*In card room*) I don't think much of that, Admiral.

GRICE. (*In card room*) You don't? What's the matter with it?

(*These last two lines are spoken hurriedly, almost*

*together in card room, as CELIA'S expression conveys to the audience her sudden determination to invent her story.)*

CELIA. (*With entire change of manner*) Call him down here, Phyllis, please, and tell him I want to speak to him.

PHYLLIS. Celia! (*Crossing to center*) But why?

CELIA. Oh, nothing. I only want to thank him, you know, about old Admiral Grice, and tell him that he need no longer complicate his anxiety about his election with worries about me or the color of my stockings.

PHYLLIS. (*Startled*) Why, Celia—what do you mean?

CELIA. Well, you see (*Laughs*) I am not quite accustomed to announcing—*my* engagement.

PHYLLIS. (*With undisguised amazement. Haltingly*) Your engagement? Why—it's—impossible.

CELIA. Yes, that's what Mr. Tarver says. Well, now suppose we call him down here, Phyllis, and tell him he is mistaken.

Phyllis. Oh—Ce—lia! (*Embraces CELIA gushingly. Rushes up to TARVER and calling*) Bobby, Bobby, Bobby, Bobby! (*TARVER drops his magazine, PHYLLIS drags him down R. of CELIA. He is right of PHYLLIS*) What do you think? Celia's engaged to be married.

TARVER. (*Looks at her, greatly astonished, dropping his eye-glass*) Never!

CELIA. (*Sarcastically*) Thanks so much, Mr. Tarver, for your kind congratulations.

PHYLLIS. (*Who has run up to card room, calling*) Aunt Ida, Aunt Ida!

(*TARVER pauses a moment and then goes R., looking over at CELIA incredulously as he goes. He finally sits on fender.*)



CELIA. (*Calling up to PHYLLIS*) Oh, Phyllis, I only meant to tell you and Mr. Tarver.

PHYLLIS. (*Excitedly. Bringing down AUNT IDA extreme L.*) Aunt Ida! Celia is engaged to be married.

AUNT IDA. (*Coming down left of table and below table to CELIA. Smiling happily*) Darling—at last—(*Kisses CELIA*)

PHYLLIS. (*Dances across to center*) I can be married now. I can be married now. (*Runs across to MADGE and sits on piano stool*)

AUNT IDA. I knew that this would happen.

CELIA. Did you, Aunt Ida?

(*These last two lines spoken hurriedly and together.*)

PHYLLIS. Madge, what do you think? Celia is engaged.

MADGE. (*Rises, drops her pen in blank surprise*) Not really!

(*PHYLLIS runs to BOBBY who is on fender and they sit together, talking excitedly, and looking at CELIA.*)

FARADAY. (*Entering from card room. Testily*) Now then, now then, can't you girls make a little less noise?

MADGE. Oh, Father! (*Rushes to him, brings him c. She is right of him*) What do you think has happened? Celia is engaged to be married. (*Pauses a moment to listen to ensuing dialogue and then runs up to card room and in dumb show tells others of CELIA'S engagement. They also in pantomime express surprise and incredulity. They come slowly out of card room*)

FARADAY. God—bless—my—soul! (*A broad grin breaks slowly on his face*) Celia—engaged?

CELIA. Why yes, Father, if you have no objection to the prospect of my leaving you.

FARADAY. Objection? (*Joyfully*) Why, I'm *delighted*, my dear girl, *delighted*.

(AUNT IDA and CELIA exchange glances and AUNT IDA, *disgusted at FARADAY, goes up to card room and talks to EVELYN.*)

CELIA. Yes, Father, I thought you would be pleased.

FARADAY. Pleased? (*With mock sentiment*) I hope I show a father's feelings when his eldest daughter proposes to—er—desert the home-nest. (*Murmurs up in card room. Reverting to his former attitude of enthusiasm*) And who is he? What's the d-e-a-r fellow's name? Eh Celia?

(EVELYN comes down extreme left. RALEIGH, GRICE and STEELE up L. C. AUNT IDA comes back of chair, R. of table L. PHYLLIS kneels on sofa, facing CELIA. TARVER comes and sits in chair below fender.)

MADGE. (*Coming down R. C.*) Yes, Celia, tell us all about him. Who is he? (*Sits L. of table R.*)

CELIA. (*Standing by chair R. of table L. Slowly*) Well—he is in the army.

RALEIGH. (*Quickly to STEELE*) A soldier, eh?

EVELYN. What's his rank?

CELIA. He's a cap—a colonel—dear—a colonel.

(FARADAY center, GRICE up L. C., RALEIGH and STEELE up L. C. EVELYN L. of table L.)

FARADAY. Colonel? What's his name?

CELIA. (*Pause*) Smith.

(*They all show pained surprise.*)

FARADAY. Smith?

CELIA. Yes, *John Smith*.

FARADAY. Smith—Huh—(*Genially*) Well, of course, the dear fellow isn't to be held responsible for *that*. Eh, Admiral? (*Joins AUNT IDA and GRICE up c.*)

GRICE. (*To FARADAY. Coming down R. C.*) Miss Faraday engaged? You might knock me down with a feather. My dear, I congratulate yo—*him*, my dear, *him*.

CELIA. (*Smiling and shaking hands with GRICE*) Thank you, Admiral, thank you.

RALEIGH. (*Up L. C. to STEELE*) Engaged!

STEELE. By George!

(*They contemplate CELIA from a new point of view.*)

FARADAY. (*Up R. C. with AUNT IDA. Smiling broadly and rubbing his hands together*) Good—old—*John—Smith!*

EVELYN. (*Patronizingly*) Well, father, he *may* be one of the *good* Smiths, you know.

MADGE. (*From chair R.*) If Celia would only stop being such a clam, and tell us.

CELIA. But, Madge dear, I have told you.

FARADAY. (*Comes down stage to R. of CELIA*) Well, Celia, I suppose he will be coming to *see* us soon?

CELIA. Oh, yes—father—after the war. (*Leaning back on chair R. of table L.*)

PHYLLIS. (*Quickly*) The war?

(*All show surprise and interest.*)

CELIA. Yes, you see he sailed this morning on board a troop ship, for Somaliland. It was just within an hour of his leaving that he—spoke to me.

FARADAY. But during that hour, he might have told you *something* about himself.

PHYLLIS. Oh, father! How absurd! On occa-

sions of *that kind*, an hour passes *very quickly*.  
(Turns to TARVER and smiles)

(All laugh.)

FARADAY. Well, I remember that when I proposed to your mother, I told her my life history *three times over* in the first hour. (Goes up stage)

EVELYN. (Deprecatingly) Oh, father! (To CELIA) What's his regiment?

CELIA. Oh, it is a very good one, Evelyn dear. It's one of the West African ones, you know. It has green thing-a-majigs all down the front.

(EVELYN goes up L. and crosses R.)

TARVER. It sounds like a garden party.

MADGE. Well, but—Celia. (Rises, comes to CELIA and offers hand and passes CELIA in front of her to chair L. of table R.)

PHYLLIS. Oh, yes, do tell us.

CELIA. (Sitting L. of table R. Eagerly, to get rid of the questions) But there is very little to tell.

(RALEIGH and STEELE drop down R. C. EVELYN joins them. AUNT IDA is back of CELIA. GRICE is C. MADGE L. of CELIA. FARADAY drops down behind CELIA'S chair to R. of AUNT IDA. They are now all grouped about CELIA'S chair, except TARVER, who is in chair below fender. They all show smiling interest.)

CELIA. Well, you see, we had been together in the house all the week—and—er—this morning I was in the garden—alone—and—and he joined me. (Pause) And—er—it was then. (Covers her face in mock confusion)

(All laugh sympathetically.)

PHYLLIS. (*From sofa*) What did he say?

CELIA. (*Looks at TARVER and PHYLLIS and waving toward TARVER*) Oh, you know.

(*All laugh.*)

PHYLLIS. And—are you happy?

CELIA. (*Looking at group bending over her*) Well, I really believe that this change will make a very great difference in my life.

FARADAY. (*Patting CELIA on shoulder*) Well, I hope so, my dear child, I hope so. Now, let's go back and finish our rubber.

(*There is a general bright buzz of conversation, such as "By jove," "I'll bet it does," "Why, yes, Celia," "Well, I should think it would," "Indeed it will," etc. FARADAY goes up to card room with EVELYN, GRICE, and AUNT IDA. They resume their bridge game in former positions. MADGE catches TARVER'S eye and they join each other up R., evidently talking about CELIA'S engagement. PHYLLIS stops on sofa, talking across to CELIA, as CELIA glances over the remaining envelopes and slips them into the large blue envelope, in view of audience.*)

RALEIGH. (*To STEELE L. C.*) It's obvious that Smith didn't find it difficult.

STEELE. (*Who is R. of RALEIGH. Looking thoughtfully at CELIA*) No, he didn't. Perhaps, we have all been mistaken. You know she isn't so bad looking—if you look long enough. (*STEELE starts to cross to CELIA. RALEIGH stops him and goes over himself. STEELE comes back of chair L.*)

RALEIGH. Miss Faraday, I haven't congratulated you yet. I hope you won't go off to Southampton soon again. We all missed you dreadfully when you were away.

(STEELE shows impatience at RALEIGH's talking to CELIA.)

CELIA. I'm sure you did. My coming back as I've done seems to have made a *very great difference*.

RALEIGH. Oh, *Great*. Believe me, *great*. Well, you've every good wish of *mine*. (*Gushingly extending his hand, which CELIA takes amusedly*)

CELIA. (*Warmly*) I am sure I have, Mr. Raleigh.

FARADAY. (*From card room*) Come, Raleigh.

RALEIGH. (*Over his shoulder*) But you threw down your cards.

FARADAY. Well! I'm going to take them up again.

GRICE. (*Impatiently*) Come along! Raleigh.

STEELE. (*Triumphantly motions RALEIGH back to card room and eagerly takes his place beside CELIA's chair*) What Raleigh has just said, I most warmly echo, my dear Miss Faraday.

(RALEIGH returns and takes STEELE by the arm.)

RALEIGH. You are wanted over here, Steele.

(CELIA watches them with amusement.)

STEELE. But I am cut out.

RALEIGH. (*Taking STEELE back to card room*) Well, you can cut in again.

(STEELE goes reluctantly back to card room, protesting to RALEIGH and looking back over his shoulder at CELIA, as he goes. Those in card room resume former positions and go on with bridge game.)

MADGE. (*Coming down to CELIA and putting her arms around her*) Celia!

(TARVER strolls up to morning room and sits right of table and begins reading again.)

CELIA. Yes.

MADGE. The *Indian Mail* goes out to-night—via Brindisi and Port Said.

CELIA. Well?

MADGE. *Port Said*. That's where letters to *Somaliland* will be transferred.

(*Celia is startled.*)

PHYLLIS. Oh, of course, you must write to him. (*Jumps up, runs up to writing table R. C., brings blotter from table, containing sheets of paper, envelopes, pens and ink, and puts them on magazine table, stands above and to the R. of CELIA*)

CELIA. (*Protestingly*) But it's too late.

MADGE. No, the post doesn't go until ten. You have just time.

PHYLLIS. (*Opening blotting pad and ink well*) You must, if it is only a note. He will be expecting something.

CELIA. Oh, I couldn't write in such a hurry.

PHYLLIS. (*Forcing pen into CELIA'S hand*) You must.

CELIA. (*Laughingly*) Well, I can't write with you two at my elbows, you know.

(*MADGE goes slowly up into card room, turning and smiling at CELIA, as she goes.*)

PHYLLIS. (*Running up and around and down to foot of sofa*) I shan't look. (*Kneels on Chesterfield sofa, facing CELIA*) What do you call him?

CELIA. (*At a loss*) I don't know.

PHYLLIS. (*Surprised*) You don't know?

CELIA. (*Recovering herself*) I mean, dear, I use a pet name.

PHYLLIS. Oh, lovely, what is it?

CELIA. Really, it's too absurd, you know, Phyllis. It's—it's—*Wobbles*.

PHYLLIS. (*Laughing and surprised*) Wobbles!

CELIA. Yes, dear. Everybody calls him—Wobbles.

PHYLLIS. (*Laughing*) Celia, it's delicious. Fancy your being married to a man called Wobbles! (*Pretending to write in the air*) "My darling Wobbles." (*Laughs and runs up to TARVER, who is seated reading in the morning room, saying as she goes*) Bobby, what do you think? (*She tells TARVER the name of CELIA'S fiance in dumb show as she sits opposite him*)

CELIA. (*Writing*) "My darling Wobbles."

(*TARVER laughs. Laugh in card room.*)

CELIA. (*Looks around to see that no one is overlooking or watching her. Writes*) "I hardly know how to write you. It all seems too hauntingly beautiful to be true. I see your face everywhere—Wobbles. The very tulips have a look of you. Oh, dearest, don't get wounded in the war." (*Leans back and laughs to herself*) Good Heavens, when I got up this morning, did I ever think that I should be doing anything like this? (*Resumes writing*) "This is my very first love letter, Wobbles, but even I know how it ought to end. Crosses, Wobbles, crosses. One, two, three, four, five, nought, nought, nought, nought, nought. To be taken as required. Thine forever. Celia Faraday." (*PHYLLIS comes to right of sofa and hands envelope to CELIA*) Thank you, dear. (*TARVER strolls down center, looking at CELIA. CELIA turns letter face down on blotter to prevent its being seen by PHYLLIS. Then seeing that she is being scrutinized by TARVER and PHYLLIS, she takes envelope from PHYLLIS, places letter in it, addresses it and seals it. Addressing letter*) Colonel Smith, Field Force, Somaliland, Africa.

TARVER. I say, Miss Faraday.

CELIA. Yes.



TARVER. I hope awfully that *you* will *help* me in my election.

RALEIGH. (*Speaking from card room, turning in his chair and holding card aloft*) Yes, it's just girls like you, Miss Faraday, who win the day.

TARVER. Righto!!

GRICE. (*Thumping the table*) Have you none of that suit, sir?

RALEIGH. (*Whirling around and playing*) Oh, yes, I beg your pardon.

(MADGE comes to desk, gets her letter, goes down to foot of sofa and hands it to PHYLLIS. STEELE sees that CELIA has finished letter and comes slowly down c.)

CELIA. Of course, I will help you, Mr. Tarver. It's awfully nice to have *you* ask *me* for help, you know.

TARVER. Oh, thanks awfully. (*Goes up and around to PHYLLIS, who is on sofa, talks to MADGE and PHYLLIS*)

STEELE. You have finished, Miss Faraday?

CELIA. Yes.

STEELE. May I put that letter in the box for you?

CELIA. No thanks, I will see to it.

STEELE. Well—wouldn't you like to come and play a game of billiards?

CELIA. No, thank you. I really must go and change my shoes. (*Indicating her feet*) You can see that these are quite damp.

STEELE. (*Most graciously*) I can't be expected to see things so small as that. But—(*Getting chair from left*) Won't you let me talk to you for just a minute?

CELIA. (*Rising*) I really must go and change.

(STEELE disconsolately and slowly puts back chair,

*leaving it turned on stage. He stands watching CELIA for a moment, then walks up L. of table L., looking at big picture on left wall, as he goes.*  
 NOTE:—EVELYN should give him a signal when CELIA exits.)

MADGE. I will go with you, dear. (*Goes to door R. 1 and takes the knob in her hand*)

(TARVER sits on fender, leans over and talks intently to PHYLLIS.)

CELIA. No, don't bother, Madgie.

MADGE. It's no bother. I have a lovely new frock I want to show you. You might want to copy it for your trousseau. (*Exit R.*)

CELIA. (*Puzzled*) My trousseau? (*Recovers herself*) My trousseau, oh, yes, yes, my trousseau. (*Looks quickly and vainly about for some place to hide letter, either in her dress or under the table. No one is looking at CELIA during this business. She sees large blue envelope in which she has already placed two unopened letters.* NOTE:—The flap of this large envelope must be turned in. She quickly holds it up and slips the letter to SMITH inside and hides it between the periodicals on lower end of table. She then looks around to see that no one has observed her and exits quickly R.)

(PHYLLIS beckons to TARVER and he sits beside her on sofa. Immediately CELIA exits, STEELE starts after her. When he gets down R. C., RALEIGH rushes after him, carrying a card.)

RALEIGH. Where are you going?

STEELE. I thought perhaps Miss Faraday might let me put on her slippers.

RALEIGH. (*Taking STEELE by the arm*) Well, she is not going to put them on in the hall. She has gone to her room. You come back here.

GRICE. (*Shouts loudly and bangs table and jumps up*) Raleigh!

FARADAY. Is this a game of bridge or a game of tag?

RALEIGH and STEELE. I beg your pardon! (*They rush back to card room and RALEIGH plays card that he has carried away*)

FARADAY. There now, he has revoked too, and that's game and rubber.

(*STEELE strolls down extreme L., goes R. a few steps and stands watching door, where CELIA has made her exit.*)

RALEIGH. (*Coming down R. C., also looking toward door R. 1*) Do I owe anything?

(*FARADAY goes C. up stage. GRICE comes C. down stage. EVELYN comes R. of L. table with a bridge score in her hand.*)

GRICE. (*Coming down center above and to the L. of RALEIGH*) Do you owe anything? You have revoked, lost the rubber, played the worst game I have ever seen, and now you ask if you owe anything. Yes, you owe Lady Trenchard three and six.

(*RALEIGH turns L. to EVELYN and pays her.*)

FARADAY. (*Moving R. toward morning room*) Come and have a whiskey and soda.

TARVER. Whiskey and soda. What ho! (*He rises*)

(*GRICE, FARADAY and TARVER exit through morning room. Enter MARTIN L. 1 with salver. STEELE starts for door R. 1 and gets to door. RALEIGH goes up to morning room. Just as he gets to the door, he sees STEELE, who is about to exit after CELIA.*)

RALEIGH. No, you don't, Steele. You come along here.

(STEELE goes up R. of sofa and exits with RALEIGH, protesting. There is a general lively subdued conversation during these exits.)

MARTIN. (When only PHYLLIS and EVELYN are left on the stage) It is time for the letters, your Ladyship.

EVELYN. (Goes L. above table, adding up her bridge score and deferring the matter to PHYLLIS) Oh, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS. (Crossing to MARTIN with letter that MADGE has given her) Here's one of Mrs. Rockingham's. (MARTIN comes C., takes it and turns to door L. PHYLLIS turns back R. Stopping) Oh, Martin. (MARTIN stops at table R.) Has Miss Faraday given you one?

MARTIN. No, Miss.

PHYLLIS. I will call her— Wait a minute— Perhaps she left it here. (Warn electrician for lights out. PHYLLIS looks about on table and writing desk, then returns to table. She aimlessly rummages through pile of periodicals at foot of table, knocking them off on the floor. In replacing them, she comes across blue envelope and in picking this up by one corner, the letters that CELIA has put in it, including the SMITH letter, fall to the floor. She goes to replace the letters, sees the SMITH letter, and speaks) Oh, here it is. (Reads address) Colonel John Smith, Somaliland. (Crosses and gives letter to MARTIN and he exits L. 1. She returns to table, places two of the magazines back on it, then the large blue envelope in which she has replaced other letters and then the rest of the magazines on top of these. All this should be done quickly and unconsciously. PHYLLIS humming while she is doing it)

EVELYN. (After PHYLLIS has replaced magazines,

I wonder who he is. Oh, let's look him up in the army list. (*Gets army list from book slide, table L.*)

PHYLLIS. Oh, let's. (*Crosses to EVELYN and together they turn over the pages to the S's. Reading*) "Smith—Smith—Smith—Smith"—Oh, here it is. "J. N. Smith, D. S. O."

EVELYN. (*With mild surprise*) Distinguished Service Order.

PHYLLIS. (*Reading*) "West African Rifles."

EVELYN. (*Crossing R. to morning room*) I suppose that's the man.

PHYLLIS. It must be. (*Replaces army list in book slide and runs after EVELYN toward morning room to electric light switch by door*) The Rifles wear green thing-a-majigs on their tunics, don't they?

EVELYN. Yes, I think they do.

(PHYLLIS switches off light and then EVELYN puts out lamp in the morning room as they exit chatting. The room is lighted now only by the fire light and light in card room. As soon as the stage is clear, CELIA enters cautiously. She goes to table R., looks for large envelope, finds it and throws it quickly into the fire, not looking at its contents. She stands thinking a moment, then goes to table L., looks at book rack, snatches out army list, crosses and, after making sure that it is the army list by looking at it in the fire light, throws it into the fire. NOTE:—The electrician should at this point flash on and off a 32 amber lamp in the fire-place to give the impression of the burning of the envelope and army list that CELIA has thrown into the fire. AUNT IDA, who has remained out of sight in the card room, enters as CELIA crosses to fire with book.)

AUNT IDA. Why, Celia.

CELIA. (*Turns around, startled.* Goes to light

*switch up R. and turns on lights*) Oh, it's you, Aunt Ida.

AUNT IDA. (*Comes down and crosses to center and sees book in flames*) Celia, what was that?

CELIA. (*Sitting on fender and swinging her foot*) That? The army list.

AUNT IDA. The army list? And you burned it? Celia!

CELIA. Well, Aunt Ida.

AUNT IDA. (*Beside chair L. of table R. In low voice, almost tearfully*) Celia, darling, have you been doing something—foolish? (*CELIA laughs*) Is there—is there—anything peculiar about—Colonel Smith?

CELIA. (*Smiling*) What would you call—peculiar, Aunt Ida?

AUNT IDA. (*With great gentleness, but evidently distressed*) Forgive me, dearest. It is—is there anything about Colonel Smith you don't want the family to know?

CELIA. Yes. (*Going to AUNT IDA above chair R. Laughs*) There is—something—about Colonel Smith—I don't want the family to know. (*Laughs*)

AUNT IDA. Why, isn't he—what you said?

CELIA. (*Looking at AUNT IDA and laughing*) He is not.

AUNT IDA. (*Timidly*) No—?

CELIA. He is—not!! (*CELIA above chair R. swings AUNT IDA into it*)

AUNT IDA. Mercy, child! Don't drive me crazy! He is not—not what?

CELIA. Not at all. (*Looks at AUNT IDA and begins to laugh irrepressibly*)

AUNT IDA. Celia!

CELIA. (*Bends above AUNT IDA, putting her arms about her from back and kissing her neck*) Hush—listen, dear— Will you swear you won't betray me?

AUNT IDA. But—Celia!

CELIA. Will you promise, Aunt Ida? I know I

can trust you if you will only really promise never to breathe a word of what I am going to tell you to any living being?

AUNT IDA. Well—but—I am not sure.

CELIA. Oh, very well then—if you don't want to know—(*Crosses to chair R. of table L. and sits*)

AUNT IDA. No, no, Celia, I promise. There now, I have promised.

CELIA. Very well then. (*Slowly and emphatically*) There—isn't—any—Colonel Smith.

AUNT IDA. (*Helplessly*). There—isn't—any—Colonel?

CELIA. None.

AUNT IDA. Then who is he?

CELIA. He *isn't*. I invented him.

AUNT IDA. (*Rising*) But, Celia—your engagement?

CELIA. Well, naturally I invented that too.

AUNT IDA. Celia Faraday, you are not telling the truth.

CELIA. (*Shaking her head*) No.

AUNT IDA. (*Going towards CELIA*) You are deceiving everybody.

CELIA. Yes.

AUNT IDA. You are being frightfully immoral.

CELIA. Yes.

AUNT IDA. (*Startled*) And how on earth are you going to keep them from finding out?

CELIA. (*Taking AUNT IDA'S hand*) Well, first of all, dear, a regiment *did* sail for Somaliland this morning.

AUNT IDA. Yes, but regiments sail back.

CELIA. Wobbles won't.

AUNT IDA. Wobbles?

CELIA. (*Laughing to herself*) Isn't that a heavenly name, Aunt Ida,—Wobbles?

AUNT IDA. (*Turning away from CELIA reprovingly*) Celia!

CELIA. (*Still seated, throwing out her arms with a*

*big gesture*) Oh, the difference that dear, dear man is going to make in my life. Oh, the difference.

AUNT IDA. (*Going back to CELIA and putting her hand on her shoulder*) Oh, my dearest child. Do give up this mad scheme and come back with me and be happy in Chicago.

CELIA. Oh, I couldn't give it up now. It's going to be too much fun. Now be a dear and stand by me through this and then I'll go to Chicago and stay there forever, but first let me have this one mad experience, do let me enjoy my blushing triumph as a brave and absent soldier's adored fiancée. (*Crosses to table R. and straightens writing things*) Do you know, Aunt Ida, I just loved writing that first love letter to him just now.

AUNT IDA. But Celia, your letter!!

CELIA. That is all right, dear. I burned that. Do you know what I am going to do, Aunt Ida? (*Suddenly throwing herself in chair L. of table R.*)

AUNT IDA. What?

CELIA. I am going to make it a point now to shut myself alone in my room every afternoon for hours—let someone else look after the house and the servants while I correspond with Wobbles. (*AUNT IDA laughs*) I am going to give myself a chance at last. I'm going to do all sorts of wonderful things.

AUNT IDA. (*Down c.*) What?

CELIA. (*Rising and coming to her*) I don't know what, but I'm going to do them. One day I'll wear a haunted look in my eye as I gaze sadly toward Somaliland. I wonder where it is. (*Looks around*) The next, I'll have a merry laugh or else a mocking smile. By day, I'll wander through the woods and think of him. By night, I'll sit before the fire and dream of him.

AUNT IDA. Celia! Celia!

CELIA. Oh, I know I'll be a perfect fool, but I'll be the only one who will know it, and if one little fib can turn this household upside down, I am going to



keep it there now just as long as it pleases me.  
(*Saunters right*)

AUNT IDA. (*Frightened*) Celia, suppose you are found out!

CELIA. (*Coming back c.*) Now, what should I do? My heroic Wobbles—my beloved Colonel Smith will die—in Somaliland. (*Going to magazine table, get calendar, comes down c. to AUNT IDA and runs over leaves*) Now, let me see when—when will he die? (*Stops at a leaf*) On October 11th. There now, it is all arranged. (*She replaces calendar on table*) After eight brief months of the most perfect understanding, I shall lose—Wobbles. After eight months, I'll write out a notice of his death and you will send it to the Times.

AUNT IDA. (*Slowly*) To *The Times*? I?

CELIA. Yes.

AUNT IDA. Never. (*Sits R. of table L.*)

CELIA. What? Not if I promise to go with you to Chicago? (AUNT IDA *shakes her head*) And you know how much you always wanted me to do that. Oh, yes, you will, Aunt Ida. (*Goes to her*) I'll buy the tickets to-morrow. You shall have the very nicest cabin on the whole ship. On October 11th, we will kill off the Colonel and the very next day, we will sail away, we'll sail away. (*Crosses R. gayly*)

AUNT IDA. I tell you, I will not help you. It's too immoral.

CELIA. Oh, very well then. Have I, or have I not, proved now that I can help myself?

AUNT IDA. (*Rising and coming c. Half angry, half laughing*) Are you, or are you not, ashamed of yourself, Celia Faraday?

CELIA. Ashamed? I? Why, no, not the least little bit in the world. I don't believe I was ever so happy in all my life.

AUNT IDA. Oh, oh!

CELIA. It's all very well, dear, for you to "Oh, oh" at me, but I ask you, Aunt Ida, have you ever

been pitied and patronized as I was here to-night, as I have been all these years, and looked upon as old and ugly and dowdy and dull.

AUNT IDA. (*Sympathetically*) Not that, Celia, not that.

CELIA. Oh, don't think I don't know those things about myself. I do, but I don't like to hear them all the time, just the same. Have *you* ever been a wall-flower at every ball you have gone to, while all the other girls danced and had a perfectly lovely time? Have *you* ever been seated next to the *oldest, deafest* members of the community at every dinner party you have gone to? Positively, Aunt Ida, I've grown so now that I can't talk at a dinner party except through an ear trumpet. (*Goes R. and then returns*) And, if that Tarver creature or a Jim Raleigh or that old fossil of an Admiral or any other mortal trouser-wearing remnant of humanity had ever condescended to propose to me, there isn't a man or woman in this entire household, beginning with Martin and the boot boy, who wouldn't respect me and treat me quite differently in consequence.

AUNT IDA. Yes, I know it.

CELIA. Oh, don't *I* know it?

AUNT IDA. Yes, it has been pretty well rubbed in.

CELIA. Yes, I should say it has. Well, it has just been rubbed in so hard to-night that, as Phyllis would say, the straw has broken the worm's back and the worm has turned at last. Never, never, never again will I be content to be what I have been all these years, "Good old Celia." (*Walking R.*) Yes, "Nice old thing." (*Walking to c.*) Celia who doesn't want things and Celia who looks after things and Celia who doesn't mind things and Celia who attends to things. Well, Celia who attends to things is dead. Now everything attends to Celia. (*Warn curtain. From now on, gay and laughing and walking to and fro across stage with AUNT IDA, slowly, her arm around AUNT IDA'S waist*) When the day begins and

Father shouts, "God bless my soul, what's the matter with this coffee?" (*Turns right*) I'll be upstairs in bed, drinking chocolate. And then, when the evening comes and Martin says, "Beg pardon, Miss, but the whiskey is out," I'll say, "I don't care. Colonel Smith doesn't drink." (*Turns L.*) Instead of keeping house accounts, I'm going to write my love letters and instead of ordering groceries, I'm going to order frocks, and wait until you see the frocks I'm going to order. (*They stop walking*) I'm going to be a blazing dream. I'll be younger than the youngest of them, gayer than the gayest, and what do I care now what any of them say or do or think about me? I'll wear just as many green stockings as they wish at as many weddings as they please, and I'll laugh and I'll sing and I'll dance them into holes, because why? Well, I'll have a sweetheart of *my own*, don't you see? I'll be the lady love of—Wobbles. (*Waves her handkerchief in the air and she and AUNT IDA embrace, laughing heartily*)

### QUICK CURTAIN.

(*Running time, 30 to 35 minutes, depending on laughs.*)

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### ACT II.

SCENE:—*Same as ACT I. There is a slight rearrangement of furniture and addition of properties. Table and chairs L. C., moved 12 inches nearer center. Arm-chair put left of table and plain chair right of table. The lamp has been moved from table to top of cabinet L., making room for tea-tray laid for five people. Also on the tray is a plate containing plum cake, a three-shelf muffin stand or curate, containing cakes and*

*sandwiches is placed below cabinet. Sewing bag, purse and army list have been removed. Throat spray for PHYLLIS behind vase on table R. A medicine bottle in room off R. Embroidery on table R. for PHYLLIS. Election speech (a roll of foolscap paper) on cabinet L. for TARVER. Waste paper basket removed. The curtains are drawn closer than in ACT I and card table has been folded and placed against backing and chairs distributed against backing of card room. The ladies are in afternoon house dress and FARADAY in frock or morning coat. All the flowers are changed and autumn varieties replace those of spring. It is eight months later in the late afternoon. Half way through the act, it grows darker and lights are required, though lights are full up to commence. As curtain rises, PHYLLIS is seated on sofa R., doing some embroidery. EVELYN is toying with a book, seated L. of table R. MADGE is at the head of the tea table, pouring tea. FARADAY stands to left of table.*

FARADAY. (*Running over the books in book slide*) Where is that army list? It's a great nuisance, not a sign of the army list. The army list has disappeared *again*. I wanted to write to General Partington this morning and I couldn't find out whether he was a K. C. B. or a K. C. S. I.

(AUNT IDA *enters through card room in out-door dress and comes directly down L. C. She should show signs of nervous apprehension all through the opening of the ACT.*)

MADGE. Tea, Aunt Ida?

AUNT IDA. Please. (*Nervously*) What's the matter, William?

FARADAY. The army list has disappeared *again*. I haven't seen one for months. Phyllis, will you ask Celia to order *another* new one? (*Sits left*)

PHYLLIS. I do, Father, every time, but Celia always forgets it.

AUNT IDA. (*Sits on edge of chair, R. of table L. On tenter hooks*) Has the Times come yet?

FARADAY. No.

AUNT IDA. It's very late.

FARADAY. (*Getting up and getting muffin stand from below cabinet, sets it between his knees*) It is always very late. I eat much too much tea every day, waiting for that Times. It's not good for me. (*Selects a big muffin from stand*)

EVELYN. But, Father, couldn't you make up your mind to restrain yourself?

(*Enter MARTIN through card room.*)

FARADAY. I can make up my mind all right, but I can't restrain myself. (*Bites into the muffin*)

MARTIN. (*Announcing*) Admiral Grice.

(*Enter GRICE through card room. MARTIN comes down L. of table to door. GRICE comes down to table.*)

FARADAY. How do you do, Grice, have some tea.

(*All greet ADMIRAL in casual tones.*)

GRICE. Thanks.

(*MADGE pours him a cup of tea. He takes it and crosses and shakes hands with LADY TRENCHARD and PHYLLIS, then goes and stands below fender.*)

FARADAY. (*Stopping MARTIN at door L.*) And Martin, see that another army list is bought. Send in to Lumley at once.

MARTIN. Another army list, sir? Yes, sir. (*Exit L. 1 E.*)

GRICE. (*In an injured tone*) *Celia* is not here!

PHYLLIS. She has gone to see old Wilson, young Wilson's father. There is a rumor that he's wavering.

FARADAY. *Wavering! Wilson?* He has some influence, too. I do hate a station master who can't stick to his political principles.

GRICE. What's Wilson's trouble?

EVELYN. Compulsory vaccination. He can't spell it, so he's against it.

GRICE. Silly ass! Well, if anyone can settle him, it will be *Celia*.

PHYLLIS. Yes, isn't she splendid? I believe *Celia* could make *anybody* do *anything*.

AUNT IDA. Have you just discovered that?

GRICE. I don't think that's much of a discovery.

AUNT IDA. Nor I.

MADGE. Yes, but Aunt Ida, you never really knew *Celia* before.

AUNT IDA. Before what?

MADGE. (*Enthusiastically*) Before she was *engaged*. Before she let herself *go*, before she showed us all the *Celiaishness* of *Celia*.

GRICE. There isn't a finer girl in England. (*Puts tea cup on mantel*) No, nor a finer dinner than the one I'm giving her to-night.

(*Enter* TARVER L. 1, *elaborately dressed and spattered with mud. He leans against jamb of door weakly. Everyone but* AUNT IDA *starts in surprise at sight of* TARVER. NOTE:—AUNT IDA *does not participate in this scene, being wholly engrossed in the matter of the Times.*)

PHYLLIS. (*Starting up, goes toward* TARVER *a few steps*) Bobby!!!!

TARVER. (*Leaning weakly against door*) I'm dead to the world.

EVELYN. What has happened?

TARVER. The most awful thing.

PHYLLIS. It was that dreadful ordeal of laying the corner stone, I suppose.

GRICE. (*Contemptuously*) They asked *you* to lay a corner stone?

TARVER. They had to have a *personage*.

OMNES. A personage!

TARVER. You see, the beastly ground was full of puddles and, just as I stepped forward with a trowel in my hand, I slipped, and——

GRICE. And sat down in one of them, I suppose.

TARVER. That's exactly what I did do. Oh! How they all yelled. (*All laugh, ADMIRAL loudest. Coming c. and limping*) It's all very well for you to laugh, Admiral, but that puddle may cost us the seat.

FARADAY. Tarver!

GRICE. Tarver! Bring a trowel and a pail of mortar to my garden to-morrow morning at 11 o'clock sharp. I'll teach you *how* to lay a corner stone. (*Gets his cup, goes up and crosses above sofa to tea table, and puts his cup down*)

(PHYLLIS comes c. to TARVER.)

TARVER. Oh, Phyllis, where are my voice lozenges?

PHYLLIS. (*Taking his arm sympathetically*) They're all gone, Bobby, but Celia said she would fetch you some.

TARVER. That's kind of her. My throat's awful. Where's the spray?

(PHYLLIS runs up and around to R. of sofa, getting spray. TARVER sits on stool below sofa and PHYLLIS comes down to R. of him.)

PHYLLIS. (*Spraying his throat*) Never mind, Bobby, there are only ten days more.

TARVER. (*Chokes*) I don't think I can last out the ten days. When that bench broke last night in the middle of my speech, I really thought it was my nervous system gone at last.

GRICE. (*Thunderously. Coming c.*) Tarver!

TARVER. (*Jumps*) Oh, Admiral, don't speak to me like that or I shall cry.

(PHYLLIS *sits on foot of sofa, her arm on TARVER'S shoulder.*)

GRICE. You made a mistake last night. Canada is not to the North of Alaska.

TARVER. Did I say it was? (PHYLLIS *shakes her head. Looks toward PHYLLIS*) Oh, how awful!

GRICE. Tarver, you are dining with me to-night.

TARVER. Yes, sir.

GRICE. Bring your Atlas. We will go slowly through the countries of the world in my study afterwards.

PHYLLIS. (*Rises quickly*) Oh, but you can't, Admiral. There's the Philharmonic concert after your dinner party, and we all have to go to it.

TARVER. Yes, and my *opponent* is going to be there.

PHYLLIS. If Bobby were late, it would produce a bad impression.

GRICE. Then come before dinner.

TARVER. (*Rising*) But, Admiral, I haven't written a word of my election speech yet except "Gentlemen" and that's a *lie*.

GRICE. (*Threateningly*) Tarver! Wilson is not the only elector in the Lumley division who is wavering.

PHYLLIS. (*Starts*) Oh, Admiral!

FARADAY. (*Seated L.*) You, Grice, you?

PHYLLIS. Oh, you couldn't vote *against Bobby!*

GRICE. Perhaps not, but I might try.

TARVER. Oh! I'll bring my Atlas! (*Speaks despairingly. Turns up R. looking for tonic*)

PHYLLIS. (*Running to ADMIRAL*) Oh, yes, Bobby will be delighted to bring his Atlas.

GRICE. Bobby will be delighted to *take away his*



Atlas. (*MARTIN enters L. 1 with copy of the "London Times" and a small folded periodical on salver*) Tarver, geography, 8 o'clock sharp. Dinner 8:15. (*Turns to table*)

MARTIN. The Times, sir.

FARADAY. At last.

GRICE. Ah, the Times!

AUNT IDA. (*Rising in alarm and backing up stage from chair. GRICE takes her place in chair*) Oh, the Times, the Times!

TARVER. Oh, Phyllis, where is that bottle of Guy's tonic?

PHYLLIS. It is out here, Bobby. (*Exit in the morning room*)

TARVER. (*Following her*) Thanks awfully. I needed it badly.

(*MADGE takes periodical and begins to read. FARADAY takes the outer sheet of the Times, pulls it off, and throws it across table. It falls to floor R. of table. GRICE stoops to pick it up. EVELYN takes it from his hand as he rises, saying, "Thank you, Admiral." GRICE looks at her disgustedly and sits twiddling his thumbs. NOTE:—The outer sheets of the Times must be stuck together in order to have them fall properly. NOTE:—The birth, marriage and death column of the Times is in the upper left hand corner of the first page. EVELYN, MADGE and FARADAY have become absorbed in their papers. GRICE looks about him and then, exasperated, seizes a book and sits R. of table L. reading it.*)

FARADAY. (*After a pause*) I never saw a paper like this. (*Strikes paper with back of his hand*) There is absolutely nothing in this paper.

(*TARVER and PHYLLIS re-enter, go to fender and sit. TARVER has had his clothes brushed.*)

GRICE. I never saw a paper with anything in it.  
(Pause) How about the bye-elections?

FARADAY. (*Grunting, absorbed in his paper*)  
Huh! (*Long pause*)

EVELYN. (*Reading front page*) Oh, Madge,  
Elsie Hardiman is engaged.

MADGE. Not really?

AUNT IDA. (*From up stage, comes slightly R. C. Uneasily and anxiously watching EVELYN*) Isn't there— isn't there any other news, Evelyn?

EVELYN. No, dear.

AUNT IDA. Anybody married?

EVELYN. No one we know.

AUNT IDA. (*With a forced attempt at cheerfulness*) Or dead?

EVELYN. (*Absently. Looking over paper*) No, dear. Ab—so—lutely noth— (*Her eye suddenly lights on SMITH'S death notice. She reads it in pantomime. A look of horror comes over her face and she utters a shrill scream*)

(*All rise hastily with exclamations.*)

FARADAY. (*Jumping to his feet*) God bless my soul, what's the matter, what's the matter?

TARVER. Great Scott! What's the matter?

MADGE. What is the matter, Evelyn?

GRICE. (*Coming center*) Really, Lady Trenchard, you ought not to startle people like that. It's selfish. (*Goes to her, takes paper from her limp hand and comes down stage*) What's the news, eh?

FARADAY. (*Taking paper from GRICE with importance, and crossing L.*) I'll tell you.

EVELYN. (*In hushed whisper*) Father, the deaths, the deaths!

(*During the following scene, GRICE is fairly dancing with impatience.*)

FARADAY. (*Reads death notice and sits heavily extreme L. with a sigh*) Poor girl!

MADGE. (*From above table*) Father.

(FARADAY hands paper to MADGE saying, "Read, read.")

PHYLLIS. (*After a slight pause runs across stage to MADGE*) What is it, Madge?

MADGE. Oh, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS. (*Stands by MADGE, takes paper and reads*) That does seem cruel, doesn't it?

GRICE. Why do people want to keep the news to themselves? (*Takes paper away from PHYLLIS and comes down c. He reads*) Whew! (*Stands ruminating*) Well, well, well, well! (*Holds paper to him*)

TARVER. (*Seated in chair below fender. Plaintively*) Will somebody kindly tell me what's happened?

GRICE. Always thinking of yourself, Tarver. (*Reads slowly and impressively*) "On October the 11th—of wounds—at Berbera—Somaliland—Colonel Smith."

TARVER. (*Feeling that he must say something*) On October the 11th—that is tough, isn't it?

FARADAY. Yes, it's hard. I've been inquiring about rooms at the Club. I didn't expect this.

PHYLLIS. (*At head of table*) It's more terribly and cruelly hard on Celia than it would be upon any other woman.

GRICE. (*Putting paper on table*) Why?

PHYLLIS. Because—(*Breaks off*) Don't you remember the night when she told us of her engagement eight months ago. She said then that her betrothal would make an extraordinary difference in her life.

(*Ready door bell.*)

EVELYN. Then she wasn't happy. Now she is.

MADGE. And when she is, this blow falls without even a telegram to break the force of it.

PHYLLIS. It is too horrible. Nothing but an announcement in the Times sent by Post.

(NOTE:—*The voices in each succeeding line should descend in scale.*)

MADGE. On October the 11th——

TARVER. Of wounds——

FARADAY. At Berbera——

EVELYN. Somaliland——

GRICE. Colonel Smith——

TARVER. (*Rising and coming L. to stool below table*) By Jove! If Celia withdraws from the contest, I'm done.

(*Door bell rings off L. TARVER sits on stool.*)

GRICE. (*Alarmed*) Wasn't that the front door bell?

MADGE. (*Coming down stage*) Who is to break the news to her?

GRICE. (*Pauses, looks around and suddenly points to TARVER*) Tarver.

TARVER. (*Springs to his feet in horror*) Me? No, no. I think it needs a woman's voice. (*Waving his hands feebly up and down in front of him*) A woman's gentle fingers.

FARADAY. God bless my soul! It isn't going to be broken to her in the deaf and dumb alphabet.

EVELYN. Let's leave Father to break the sad news to her.

FARADAY. Me! No, no. I might break down. Someone outside the family would have more command over their emotions. Some old, warm-hearted friend. (*Pause, while GRICE shows alarm*) Grice, for instance.

GRICE. Me! No, no. Ah! I have an idea.

(Comes down stage and FARADAY, MADGE, EVELYN and TARVER gather about him, FARADAY L., MADGE L. C., GRICE C., EVELYN R. C., TARVER R. Slowly, seriously and impressively) Let us all break it to her—gently—when she comes into the room. I'll give the signal—one, two, three and then we'll all say together and very gently, "Colonel Smith is dead." (Looks for approval and they all turn away in disgust)

(FARADAY goes extreme L., MADGE back to head of table L., TARVER extreme R. and EVELYN to chair, R. C.)

AUNT IDA. (Coming down stage) Hadn't you better leave it to me?

(All show tremendous relief.)

MADGE. Of course.

FARADAY. You are the very person.

GRICE. Hush! Now everybody try to be quite calm and natural and act as though nothing whatever had happened. Oh!!! The Times!

(All rush for the Times. GRICE seizes outer sheet of Times and looks wildly about for some place to hide it. In desperation, he thrusts it up his coat at the back. PHYLLIS seizes a sheet, runs up and hides it under piano cover. MADGE also seizes a sheet and hides it behind curtain of card room. GRICE sits R. of L. table. Everyone assumes strained positions with set grins on their faces. Enter CELIA, L. 1 entrance. She brings with her two small packages wrapped in tissue paper. She is dressed elaborately in out door costume and carries a light muff.)

CELIA. (Brightly) Good afternoon, everybody.

(All give a short, nervous giggle, pause and then say together, "Good afternoon, Celia." CELIA crosses to chair L. of table.)

FARADAY. (Coming down L. of CELIA, offering to take her muff) Allow me, dear.

CELIA. (Giving it to him) Oh! Thank you, Father.

(FARADAY holds both his hands in muff. PHYLLIS solicitously takes CELIA'S gloves.)

MADGE. (In a bereaved tone, offering her a cup of tea) Celia, dear, have some tea?

(FARADAY goes up and around to back R. C.)

CELIA. No thanks, Madgie. I've been having tea with the Duchess. Oh, how do you do, Admiral. (Shaking hands across table with GRICE) You don't know how I'm looking forward to your dinner party to-night. (Sits L. of table L. unwrapping two small parcels and placing tissue paper on book slide)

GRICE. (Very gloomily) It was a good dinner. I suppose that now——

(FARADAY coughs and all in a strained whisper say, "Admiral!")

TARVER. (Rising and coming C.) Did you manage to catch Wilson? (TARVER'S question shocks all)

PHYLLIS. (Trying to hush him) Bobby!

EVELYN. (In a hoarse whisper) Just at this time, too.

CELIA. No, Bobby, he was out, but see what I brought you—some throat lozenges and a box to keep them in.

TARVER. (Comes to her at foot of table and takes

*boxes from her. Lugubriously*) It's awfully good of you to think of me, Celia. (*Crosses back to L. C.*) Just at this time, too.

(EVELYN pulls TARVER violently around R. He staggers across stage and falls in chair extreme R.)

OMNES. *Hush!!!*

(GRICE glares at TARVER, PHYLLIS and MADGE offer CELIA tea, FARADAY, the muffin stand, and GRICE offers her the plate of cake. All this is done quickly and simultaneously.)

PHYLLIS. You had better have some tea, Celia.

GRICE. (*Smiling at her*) Cake, with plums in it.

CELIA. (*Laughing*) You are all very kind to me this afternoon.

(*They all turn away hurriedly, quickly putting down the things they have been offering CELIA and laughing nervously.*)

OMNES. Not at all dear, not unusually so, not a bit, etc., etc.

GRICE. Cake, with plums in it.

CELIA. (*Exchanges looks with AUNT IDA, who has worked down L. after FARADAY has gone up C. AUNT IDA nods her head. Indifferently*) Any news in the Times?

OMNES. *The Times? The Times? Why, no, I don't imagine so. Have you seen the Times? Now where has Martin put that Times, etc., etc.* (NOTE:—*This should come to a crescendo and then die down*)

EVELYN. (*In a loud, hoarse whisper to TARVER*) Oh, say something.

TARVER. (*Very nervously*) No, I don't think there was anything, was there, Admiral?

GRICE. (*Mournfully, staring straight ahead of him*) Nothing very lively.

OMNES. (*In a strained whisper*) Admiral!

FARADAY. (*To relieve situation. Gayly*) Now where has the Times got to?

(*TARVER rises and looks in fire-place, muttering to himself.*)

PHYLLIS and MADGE. Where is the Times? Have you seen the Times? I wonder what could have happened to it, etc.

(*GRICE rises and turns R. and starts up stage. The Times falls out from his back. There is general consternation.*)

CELIA. (*Seeing Times on floor*) Why, there it is, isn't it?

FARADAY. (*In mock, great surprise*) God bless my soul! So it is.

(*TARVER sinks down on fender.*)

GRICE. (*Coming down stage and picking up paper*) Now, how did that get there?

CELIA. May I see it, if everyone has quite finished? (*Holds out hand for paper. GRICE reluctantly gives paper to her. She opens it and reads. All watch her, strained and anxiously. Cheerfully*) Births, marriages, deaths. I always look first at that column, you know. (*After a pause. Laughing a little*) How very amusing!

OMNES. Amusing? Celia!! Great Scott! God bless my soul!

CELIA. (*Reading*) "On October, the 11th,—

EVELYN. (*Almost with a sob*) Eleventh!

CELIA. Elsie Hardiman to Alfred Bryce.

(*All give tremendous sigh of relief. Looking up*)



Why didn't somebody tell me Elsie Hardiman was engaged?

FARADAY. (*Comes to chair R. of L. table and lays muff down on book rack*) I wouldn't go into that, Celia. I wouldn't pursue that line of inquiry any further if I were you, my dear. (*Tries to take paper*)

CELIA. (*Retaining her hold on paper*) I just want to see if anybody is dead, Father. (*Puts out a hand surreptitiously and pulls AUNT IDA near her. They all watch her with tragic anxiety. She sees notice, reads it, and utters a long, low cry of grief, then lets paper drop on table and with another long moan, rises and buries her face in AUNT IDA'S shoulder*)

(TARVER curls up in chair extreme R., pulling his moustache.)

PHYLLIS. (*Making sympathetic motion forward*) Celia—darling.

AUNT IDA. (*Waving her handkerchief up and down*) Sh—sh—sh—sh! (*They stand in grief-stricken attitudes, contemplating her*)

FARADAY. (*Brokenly*) Celia—my child—

AUNT IDA. (*Waving her handkerchief up and down*) Sh—sh—sh—sh!

EVELYN. *Poor Celia!*

AUNT IDA. Sh—sh—sh—sh! (*Pause*) I think—she will—say something soon.

CELIA. (*Raising a flushed, quivering face from AUNT IDA'S shoulder*) So you were all—trying to keep this—from me?

GRICE. (*Coming down R.*) God help us, we ~~were~~. (*Takes off his glasses and wipes his eyes*)

PHYLLIS. Ah—Celia.

AUNT IDA. (*In same queer, choked way*) Wouldn't it be better if you all left her alone—with me?

FARADAY. (*Much relieved*) Quite so. Quite so. Come, children. (*Crosses a few steps up and right.*)

*The girls, with PHYLLIS first, MADGE, then EVELYN form a line and, with bowed heads and folded hands, walk across the morning room door. TARVER rises and walks mournfully up to door.)* Come, Admiral.

GRICE. (*Crossing up R.*) No, Faraday. I'll take my leave from this house of grief. (*Exits through card room*)

CELIA. (*Comes L. C.*) Wait, Father. (*The girls halt in door-way, TARVER above sofa*) I only want to say that I don't intend to let this news make any difference—outwardly. You see you never knew what I knew—about him, so I can't expect you to realize all that I've lost. I don't see what's to be gained by any parade of grief, so I'll go to this dinner party to-night and try to act as though nothing whatever had happened.

TARVER. (*Beaming*) That's splendid of you, Celia. It's much the wisest not to give way to sorrow. But you will get those votes you promised me, won't you?

FARADAY. Take him away. Take him away.

(*EVELYN whirls TARVER around and hands him unceremoniously off the stage. FARADAY exits. There is a pause, then AUNT IDA and CELIA burst into hearty laughter. AUNT IDA crosses to table R., sits, and CELIA sits on the arm of her chair.*)

CELIA. Oh, Aunt Ida. Didn't we get through that splendidly?

(*GRICE re-enters through card room. They quickly turn their laughter into sobs and bury their faces in their handkerchiefs.*)

GRICE. (*Coming down C.*) I have been lingering, my dear Miss Faraday, just to grasp your hand and whisper a word of cheer. Keep up your heart, my dear. Keep up your heart. Remember there are

other fish in the sea—big fish. (*Bows and elaborately exits through card room*)

CELIA. Old fool!—Isn't it a mercy I'm going to *escape* that sort of thing? There'd be a dozen more if I gave them a chance, but instead of that I'm going with you to Chicago to live and die a spinster with an unawakened soul.

AUNT IDA. (*In a high tragedy tone*) Celia, I have a queer feeling we're not done with this thing yet.

CELIA. Why, of course we are, you dear; the steamship tickets are up in my room and I'm going with you to-morrow when you leave on the noon train. What a brick you've been through it all, Aunt Ida, what a brick!

AUNT IDA. (*Laughing, then recovering herself and endeavoring to be moral. Crossing L.*) You—you—you must never do it again, Celia.

CELIA. Well, it's hardly the sort of thing one *can* do very often.

AUNT IDA. (*Seriously*) I never would have helped you send that notice to the Times, Celia, if—if—oh dear. (*Breaks down and laughs. Severely*) Oh, but I consider your whole attitude *most* immoral.

CELIA. (*Meekly*) Yes, Aunt Ida. I admit my behavior has been shocking and what a contrast to his. (*Laughs*)

AUNT IDA. (*Reprovingly*) Celia!

CELIA. Poor Colonel Smith! What harm has he ever done? Was ever a career more blameless? He lifted me down from the shelf. *Dear Colonel Smith!* He died just at the right moment. *Dear Colonel Smith.* Oh, you know he was a true soldier. He did his work in silence. Well, peace to his ashes. *Dear Colonel Smith!* Good gracious, dear, it's getting late. It's time to dress for dinner. (*She seizes AUNT IDA by the arm, gayly whirls her around, crosses and gets her muff from table*)

(Enter PHYLLIS through morning room R. Runs down R. of sofa, calling, "Celia." They resume attitudes of grief. AUNT IDA exits through morning room, holding her handkerchief to her eyes.)

PHYLLIS. (Comes c. to CELIA) Celia!

CELIA. Yes, dear.

PHYLLIS. I want you to help me. Bobby is frightfully tired. Don't you think that he and I could cut the Admiral's dinner party and dine quietly at home here? You could make it all right with the Admiral, Celia.

(Enter MARTIN, with salver and card, L. 1 E., leaves door open.)

CELIA. I'll try, dear. Martin, there will be two for dinner after all.

PHYLLIS. And may we dine in the little morning room here? (*Indicating morning room*)

CELIA. In the morning room?

PHYLLIS. It will be more snug.

CELIA. Oh, very well then, Martin, dinner in the morning room. (MARTIN offers card to CELIA) I haven't time to see anyone now. (*Crosses R. to door*) Who is it?

MARTIN. Colonel James Nugent Vavasour. He was sure that you would consent to see him, Miss, when you saw this card.

CELIA. Vavasour? Vavasour? It's some election business, of course. Phyllis, it's your affair, after all. Attend to it for me, won't you?

PHYLLIS. Very well. (CELIA exits R. MARTIN brings the card over to PHYLLIS. PHYLLIS takes card, reads it and utters a cry) Colonel Smith! Then, then—then? (*Bewildered*) Then he is not dead. It's a mistake. (*Runs to door R. as if to recall CELIA*)

MARTIN. It is Colonel Vavasour who has called, Miss. (*Goes up to tea-table, gets tray and dishes*)

PHYLLIS. But it's Colonel Smith's card. (*Turns card over suddenly*) Oh, it is a message. (*Goes to L. of table R., sits and turns up the lamp*) Written in a failing hand. (*Reads*) "Good-bye. Be kind to my friend, James Nugent Vavasour. (*To MARTIN, who has by now collected the dishes on tray and is below table R.*) Show Colonel Vavasour in and then ask Miss Faraday to come down as quickly as she can. Just say that it really is important.

MARTIN. Yes, Miss.

(PHYLLIS comes L. C. quickly and arranges her hair, etc. MARTIN re-enters, announcing COLONEL VAVASOUR. COLONEL SMITH enters and stands. MARTIN closes door quietly, goes up L., crosses it back, turns on lamp on piano and exits through morning room.)

SMITH. (*Bowing*) I am speaking to Miss Celia Faraday?

PHYLLIS. (*Holding card in her hand*) Oh, no. I'm her *much* younger sister, but I have sent for her. Won't you sit down, Colonel Vavasour? (*Sits R. of L. table. SMITH sits L.*) The card which you sent me proves that your errand is a sad one. I want to ask you to be very gentle in delivering your message to Celia. The news of Colonel Smith's death was first conveyed to her in to-day's "Times."

SMITH. I am not very surprised to hear that.

PHYLLIS. (*Melodramatically*) The bolt fell from a clear sky. She received *no telegram, no letter* to warn her of the impending destruction of her happiness. (*Places card on table*)

SMITH. (*Meaningly*) No, indeed. How could she?

PHYLLIS. She was happy. She loved and was loved. (*SMITH turns and looks at her*) And then in a second comes Fate with its cruel shears—

SMITH. (*Interrupting her*) Excuse me, but do you write for the Sunday papers?

PHYLLIS. No, but I have been listening lately to a great number of election speeches.

SMITH. I quite understand. From them those flowers of eloquence were culled. Please go on.

PHYLLIS. Celia bore the blow with remarkable courage. But now comes your *visit*, which will upset her even more than the news of Colonel Smith's death itself.

SMITH. Yes, Miss Faraday, I am quite sure that it will do that. You have made an appeal to me to deliver my harrowing message as delicately as I can. You can help me not to make mistakes.

PHYLLIS. How?

SMITH. By telling me where the lovers met, when they became engaged—and how it all happened.

PHYLLIS. But you came with Colonel Smith's card and words of recommendation written upon it by his failing hand. Didn't he tell you?

SMITH. Well, you see, he was one of those great-hearted men who never speak about themselves. And towards the end, when he might have spoken, he was singularly comatose.

PHYLLIS. (*Sympathetically*) Poor fellow!

SMITH. Oh, it's dreadful—dreadful! I suppose your sister was very devoted to him?

PHYLLIS. She *adored* him!!

SMITH. Yes. That's the part I understand best.

PHYLLIS. But Celia's engagement meant more to her than it would to most women.

SMITH. (*Recoils slightly*) Why?

PHYLLIS. It had somehow got into everybody's head that Celia didn't (*Looks around room*) attract people. Poor old Celia. (*SMITH turns uneasily in chair*) Of course, her engagement altered the whole position.

SMITH. Oh, I begin to see.

PHYLLIS. It was the night that I had just

announced *my* engagement to Mr. Tarver.—Bobby was so witty about poor old Celia having to wear *another* pair of Green Stockings at *my* wedding——

SMITH. Ah—h— Then there are other sisters?

PHYLLIS. Yes, there's Madge. She is between Celia and myself.

SMITH. Engaged?

PHYLLIS. *More* than engaged—*married*. And then comes Evelyn.

SMITH. Married?

PHYLLIS. Much *more* than married. (SMITH *stares*) A widow.

SMITH. And Miss Celia is the eldest of you all?

PHYLLIS. Oh, yes. Well, the moment after Celia was told of *my* engagement, she announced *hers*.

SMITH. To Colonel Smith. (*Turns away from her with sudden understanding*) I see.

PHYLLIS. (*More melodramatically*) You know she had met him at Southampton. (SMITH *looks at her*) For a week they had been together. (SMITH *turns in her chair*) Only that morning he had told her of his love. An hour later he was steaming down Southampton Water to leave his neglected bones on the arid wastes of a——

SMITH. (*Interrupting her*) Ahem! You'll excuse me——

PHYLLIS. I beg pardon. He was on his way to Somaliland. She wrote to him that night.

SMITH. (*Slowly*) Yes, the letter reached him. (*Tapping his pocket*) I have it here.

PHYLLIS. (*Sentimentally*) He kept it?

SMITH. Yes, he kept it. He used to sit and study it by the hour.

PHYLLIS. How truly beautiful. Oh, you must tell Celia that. You mustn't rob her of any of her grief.

SMITH. No, that would be too bad. So there was no opportunity for Smith to come and make your acquaintance?

PHYLLIS. No, but I have heard so much of him from Celia that I could almost believe I see him. (*Stares dreamily at SMITH. SMITH rises slowly, a little disconcerted. PHYLLIS rising and moving R.*) I'll go and send Celia to you.

(*MARTIN enters through morning room.*)

SMITH. Thanks. Now I know where I am.

MARTIN. (*Stands up R.*) Miss Faraday is coming down, Miss. (*Crosses and exits L., lighting chandelier in card room*)

PHYLLIS. Very well, Martin. Then I'll leave you to deliver your message alone. (*Crosses to door R. and opens it, then turns*) You have brought, I hope, one or two mementoes from him.—

SMITH. (*Puzzled for a moment*) I beg your pardon?

PHYLLIS. Little things that Celia can treasure.

SMITH. Oh, yes, yes. A few small things—trifles which Smith habitually wore.

PHYLLIS. (*Sentimentally*) Just what she will value most. (*Exits R. 1 E.*)

(*SMITH chuckles. He looks at his ring, but can't get it off, then at his knife. That won't do. Then at his cigarette case. That will not do. Also at his bunch of keys. That won't do. He reluctantly takes watch and chain from his waistcoat and looks about for something to wrap it up in. He sees the tissue paper which CELIA has left on book slide, gets it and wraps watch and chain up in it, putting it in his pocket. He takes out his scarf pin, looks at it, starts to replace it in tie. He reconsiders and wraps that up too, putting it in his pocket. He hums a snatch of song for CELIA'S entrance. CELIA enters in evening dress R. Comes R. C. SMITH does not look up.*)

CELIA. Colonel Vavasour. (*She speaks briskly,*



*having no suspicion of his business.* SMITH bows almost reverentially, sighs deeply. Looks as if about to speak, is silent. His head is bowed. *Impatiently*) I am told that you wish to see me on important business.

(SMITH nods head sadly. He looks up and, on seeing CELIA, starts with pleasurable surprise for a moment.)

SMITH. Upon important and lugubrious business.

CELIA. Oh—? Don't tell me there's some new difficulty about Mr. Tarver's election?

SMITH. I have come to speak to you about one who is dearer to you than all the world. (CELIA is perplexed) As soon as I read the announcement in the "Times" this morning—I felt that I must come to you at once.

CELIA. (Pause) The announcement!—in the "Times!" (She is startled. Stares at SMITH)

SMITH. Of the death of Colonel Smith.

(CELIA is amazed, turns away quickly.)

CELIA. You will forgive me, I am sure, Colonel Vavasour, but the news of my loss is so recent that you will understand my reluctance to discuss it with a stranger. (She moves up toward morning room as though to exit)

SMITH. Don't go, please. (CELIA turns back) It was your sister who took the card which introduces me. (He takes up card from table L.) See!

(CELIA advances L. of table R. and takes card.)

CELIA. "Colonel Smith." But there wasn't any—I mean—(Sits in chair) Colonel Vavasour, I am a little overwhelmed.

SMITH. (Sympathetically) I was afraid you would be.

CELIA. (*Staring at card*) Colonel Smith!

SMITH. I bring to you his last dying message.

CELIA. You—knew—him!

SMITH. (*Comes to her*) Turn that card over and read the last words written by his failing hand.

(CELIA turns card over.)

CELIA. "Good-bye."

SMITH. Yes. (*Sniffs. Very sadly*) "Good-bye."

CELIA. "Be kind to—my friend—"

SMITH. "James Nugent—"

CELIA. "Vavasour—"

SMITH. Col. Smith was my dearest friend. And knowing myself as I do, I can safely say that no one else will ever take his place in my affections.

CELIA. How extraordinary—(*SMITH looks at her*) I mean—how very unselfish of you.

SMITH. Ah, yes. He compelled one's love. I can appreciate possibly better than anyone else how great must be your grief. (*CELIA agrees mournfully and regards him with ludicrous suspicion. Goes to table L. and sits L. of it*) Before coming here, I went to see his dear old people. He had never told them of his engagement, but he was always secretive.

CELIA. Yes, very secretive.

SMITH. His dear little Aunt Mary was very fond of him.

CELIA. Oh! Little Aunt Mary!

SMITH. And when I told her of your engagement, she was most anxious to meet you.

CELIA. Yes, that would be very delightful—but not just yet, please—not just yet.

SMITH. Not just yet, of course not just yet. But possibly when time has reconciled you to your loss. She expressed the hope that some day—but not just yet, of course, you and she might journey together to Somaliland with a wreath.

CELIA. Yes. (*Choking and turning away her*

*head*) That's a very sweet idea. We might go out for the Xmas holidays.

SMITH. Oh! I know. I can gauge, Miss Faraday, the measure of your grief by my own. But there is just one alleviation which I am very glad to bring to you.

CELIA. What is that, please?

SMITH. When Colonel Smith died—of wounds—at Berbera, he died without any pain.

CELIA. (*Rising, alarmed*) It is very good of you, Colonel Vavasour, to have come all the way from London to tell me this. (*Starts as if to exit, holding out her hand to SMITH*)

(SMITH *also rises, takes her hand and detains her c.*)

SMITH. This—and more. I was with him at the last. How well I remember the scene. He used to lie on his sick bed—gazing across the thatched roofs of Berbera to the Arab dhows riding at their anchors in the sea. (*She turns away R.*) And he gave into my hands a few small things to bring you. (*CELIA turns away horrified*) Trifles which he habitually wore. Here are a few of them. (*Brings out packages containing watch and pin, from pockets*)

CELIA. Heavens!! No!—I couldn't think of taking them.

SMITH. (*In surprise holding them towards CELIA*) They were Smith's, and you couldn't take them! Ah, I understand. You had quarreled. (*Puts things into pockets*)

CELIA. No, we *never* quarreled. There was never one harsh word spoken by me to him or by him to me.

SMITH. (*L. c. standing*) Then why refuse his gifts?

CELIA. (*Goes to table R. At a loss*) Well—you see—he had never given me anything.

SMITH. (*Suddenly smiles and brings out parcels again*) How like Smith! How very like him! **Even**

he had his failings. But we, who knew him so well, can afford to speak of them frankly.

CELIA. I don't think you understand, Colonel Vavasour. Gifts would have been impossible in such an engagement as that which existed between him and me.

SMITH. (*Severely*) Let Smith be the judge of that. (*Goes a step toward her*) Perhaps he is in this room now watching you refuse his gifts. (*CELIA moves R. uneasily looking back over her shoulder. Sternly*) Watching you with the pain he *didn't* feel when he died of wounds at Berbera. (*He follows her and forces her to take the watch. She gingerly takes it and unwraps it, letting the watch fall out and hang by the chain, which she holds. It is a large, heavy gold watch of the "turnip" variety*) His watch and chain. (*She lifts it up and down to show its weight*) He bids you wear it always on your bosom. (*She recoils. Pleadingly*) To please Smith, whom we both loved. (*She looks helplessly about for a moment and then in essaying to hang the watch about her neck, it slips and falls down inside her dress. They turn away from each other with varying emotions. Turning back*) By Jove! I say that's ripping of you.

CELIA. I beg your pardon, sir!

SMITH. (*Solemnly*) I am thanking you in my dead comrade's name, my dearest friend. (*Bows his head*)

CELIA. (*Crossing him to L.*) Oh, I didn't understand.

SMITH. (*Unwraps second parcel and follows her across the stage*) With this, Smith pinned his tie—a curious jewel. He was very fond of it. I trust you will treasure it. (*CELIA tries to refuse pin, but SMITH forces it upon her. Goes through and empties all his pockets, offering cigarette case, knife, keys, etc.*) And here I have a few more things.

CELIA. (*With a gesture of horror, retreats up stage,*

*to card room*) No, no, no, no, please! I don't want them. I——

(TARVER enters through morning room in dinner jacket. He shows surprise at seeing SMITH. SMITH replaces articles in his pockets.)

TARVER. (*At door R.*) Oh, I am so sorry. I didn't know you were engaged. I think I left my election speech somewhere.

CELIA. (*Eagerly coming down c.*) That's quite all right, Bobby. We have finished our business. Good-bye, Colonel Vavasour. It is extremely kind of you to have taken all this trouble for a stranger. (*Crosses down R. as though to exit*)

(TARVER crosses to cabinet L. and gets his speech.)

SMITH. (*Follows CELIA to L. c.*) But I haven't delivered a single word of the message I am pledged to deliver.

TARVER. (*Picks up speech and comes down L. of table to L. of SMITH*) I'm just going.

SMITH. Don't let me drive you away, Mr.—Mr.— (*Looks to CELIA to introduce him to TARVER*)

(CELIA has turned and walked up stage.)

TARVER. Oh, my name is Tarver.

SMITH. And mine is Nugent Vavasour. How do you do? I am delighted to make your acquaintance. (*Shakes hands with him warmly*) I have just met Miss Phyllis Faraday.

TARVER. Oh, have you?

SMITH. Yes. I am just back from Somaliland.

TARVER. Are you? I say! I don't suppose you could stay a little longer and help me with my election, could you?

(CELIA *in alarm, rushes to head of table and seizes railway guide.*)

SMITH. (*Enthusiastically*) Of course, I could, my dear fellow. Why didn't you mention it before?

TARVER. Well, I haven't waited *very* long.

CELIA. (*Looking at railway guide*) Bobby, we couldn't think of making such a demand upon Colonel Vavasour's time.

TARVER. Well, it's touch and go with me, you know.

SMITH. And I know a great deal about elections.

TARVER. (*To CELIA*) There!

SMITH. Yes. I was once on the Committee of a Club.

(TARVER *looks puzzled.*)

CELIA. (*Looking at guide. Firmly*) There's an excellent train leaving at 8:30. (*Lays down guide, pushes chair aside and walks down R. C. between chair and table*)

SMITH. I shall be most happy if I can catch it, but I should be false to my friend if I went without delivering his last dying message.

TARVER. You can't deliver it to-night, for Celia is going out to a dinner party.

(CELIA *gives BOBBY a swift, furious glance behind SMITH'S back.*)

SMITH. (*Shocked*) To a dinner party?

TARVER. Why, yes, and on to a concert afterwards.

CELIA. (*With great dignity*) It's a classical concert. (*Pause*) By the Local Philharmonic Society, and Admiral Grice, with whom we are all dining, is the most important person in the constituency.

SMITH. (*Sternly*) So you are all going out to enjoy yourselves.

TARVER. (*Crossing R. and up stage*) Oh, they are. Phyllis and I for once are going to stay at home and dine quietly.

SMITH. (*Turns toward TARVER and stops him at door*) But is it wise for you, Mr. Tarver, to stay at home at this very critical time? I should have thought, knowing as much as I do about elections, that it was bad policy to offend so important a person as Admiral Grice.

TARVER. (*In door-way*) Oh, that's all right. Celia can twist him around her little finger. He simply worships—

(CELIA, who has made a ball of the tissue paper on the table, throws it at BOBBY, who exits hurriedly without SMITH'S seeing this.)

SMITH. (*Sternly. Going to her*) You never loved him.

CELIA. (*Indignantly. Moving R.*) Oh!

SMITH. On the evening of the very day which brings you news of his decease, you are dressed to conquer and allure.

CELIA. (*More indignant*) Colonel Vavasour!

SMITH. You know as well as I do how at all times Smith disapproved of a décolleté gown. Born and brought up in a rigid and unbending family, he never quite emancipated himself from the principles of Calvinism. You know that? (*He waits for her to answer*)

CELIA. (*Weakly. Sinks on stool at bottom of sofa*) Yes.

SMITH. (*Looks at her*) And it's not even black—! A dinner party with an amorous Admiral. After the dinner party, the wildest gaieties! (*Goes L.*)

CELIA. Do you call a classical concert by the Local Philharmonic Society "the wildest gaiety?" You never heard one.

SMITH. (*Reproachfully. Coming back to CELIA*) You know *what* a low opinion Smith had of *all* forms of music. Dangerously sensuous. How often have I heard him breathe those words when the regimental band struck up the tune of "Auld Lang Syne." (*She rises, goes R.*) You never loved him. Give me back the watch and chain.

CELIA. (*Confused*) I can't— You utterly fail to understand the situation, Colonel Vavasour. All the help that any of us can give is needed at this election. To-night is particularly important. The two candidates are to meet on neutral ground.

SMITH. Then certainly Mr. Tarver ought to go—not you.

CELIA. But I ask you, would Colonel Smith have wished me at a time like this to shut myself alone in my room with nothing but his memory for my companion?

SMITH. He'd have loved it.

FARADAY. (*Entering through morning room in evening dress, carrying coat and hat*) Ready, Celia, ready! (*CELIA and SMITH separate, SMITH going well L. FARADAY putting coat and hat on piano stool, comes down C.*) Aren't the others down yet?

CELIA. Father, this is Colonel Vavasour.

FARADAY. How do you do?

(*They shake hands.*)

SMITH. How do you do? I have just returned from Somaliland.

FARADAY. Oh! Then you knew——

(*SMITH nods, drops his head.*)

SMITH. My dearest friend.

FARADAY. Poor fellow! Poor fellow! (*SMITH looks up*) Oh, not for that reason—not for that reason, of course. (*LADY TRENCHARD, MADGE and PHYLLIS enter, in evening dress, followed by TARVER*)



My daughters, Colonel Vavasour. We are only waiting for your aunt, now.

(LADY TRENCHARD shakes hands gushingly, crosses to SMITH and sits R. of table L., drawing on her gloves. MADGE merely bows as she crosses and joins EVELYN. PHYLLIS crosses, and joins them. SMITH goes R. C. FARADAY has gone L. at back and comes down stage L. of table L. TARVER goes directly and sits on fender.)

FARADAY. (Continuing) Sorry we can't keep you to dinner.

CELIA. (Sits on lower end of sofa) That's quite all right, father. Colonel Vavasour is obliged to return to London to-night. There is an excellent train at 8:30.

SMITH. (Takes up railway guide, which CELIA has left open on table and reads) "Stops at every station, has a two hours' wait at Bletchley, and arrives in London at 3:30 in the morning." (Looks at CELIA) An excellent train. The express goes at ten.

FARADAY. Then of course you'll stay and dine here first. Martin shall look after you.

SMITH. I shall be most happy. (At CELIA) I have brought a message for Miss Faraday and I shall be unable to deliver it if she goes out to dinner.

CELIA. (Speaking over her shoulder) Father, you know I promised you this afternoon that I should not let this news interfere——

FARADAY. But, my dear child, thinking it over, we can't expect such a sacrifice.

PHYLLIS. (In a whisper to MADGE) But she must go. There's only dinner for two.

FARADAY. Dinner for two! What two?

TARVER. (Coming down R. to door) Well, you see, I am worn to a shadow, and Phyllis and I thought——

FARADAY. (*Coming c.*) Oh, you did! Did you? You get elected first, my lad, and think afterwards.

TARVER. Oh, I say!

FARADAY. Phyllis and Tarver shall dine with Admiral Grice.

PHYLLIS. But, father——

FARADAY. Celia and Colonel Vavasour shall stay behind and eat *their* dinner.

TARVER. You don't know how I need a rest.

CELIA. Yes, Father, Bobby is very tired.

SMITH. As for myself, and I know a great deal about elections, I think it would be extremely prejudicial, if Mr. Tarver didn't go.

FARADAY. Then, that settles it.

(TARVER *exits* R. 1 E., *looking back belligerently at* COLONEL VAVASOUR. EVELYN *in dumb show* tells PHYLLIS *to get her wraps and* PHYLLIS *flounces out through morning room.*)

MARTIN. (*Entering* L. 1 *and announcing*) Mr. Steele and Mr. Raleigh.

(RALEIGH *comes c. quickly to* FARADAY. STEELE, *shaking hands first with* EVELYN, *then stepping back and shaking hands with* MADGE, *speaks from* L. *of* MADGE *near door.*)

STEELE. How do you do, Mr. Faraday?

FARADAY. Good evening, boys.

STEELE. We have both, I believe, arrived with the same idea. We are all going to the dinner party, aren't we? I have my mother's brougham and, since you are rather a large party, (*Looking across at* CELIA) I thought I might be allowed to give *someone* a lift.

RALEIGH. I have come in *my own motor car*, and since you are rather a large party, (*Also looking pointedly at* CELIA) I thought I might be allowed to give *someone* a lift.

FARADAY. It is very kind of you boys to think of us. We *shall* be a little bit squeezed. We *are* rather a large party, though Celia is not going.

STEELE and RALEIGH. (*Disappointedly*) Not going?

FARADAY. No. Colonel Smith is dead. (STEELE and RALEIGH *turn away and a slow smile breaks over their faces*) This is Colonel Vavasour. (STEELE and RALEIGH *eye SMITH with interest*) He knew Colonel Smith.

SMITH. (*L. of table R.*) His dearest friend. I bring his last dying message. (CELIA *rises from sofa, glances at SMITH and goes up to doorway R.*) He used to lie on his sick bed, gazing across the thatched roofs of Berbera to the Arab dhows riding at their anchors in the sea.

(CELIA *comes down R. of sofa.*)

STEELE. I am sure that must be very affecting, but it will be extremely bad for the *cause*, if Miss Faraday stays at home to-night, and this is a time when it doesn't do for any of us to be selfish. You'll come, won't you, Miss Faraday?

FARADAY. (C.) Certainly not.

SMITH. (R. C.) It would really be almost indecent to press Miss Faraday to go. (SMITH and FARADAY *turn up stage*)

STEELE. (*Slightly piqued*) Oh, very well. Then as I can't do anything for anyone, I suppose I had better be getting along. (*Exits L. 1 E. and leaves door open*)

RALEIGH. How that fellow Steele does give himself away. Silly ass! (*Goes R. to CELIA*) I must say, Miss Faraday, that I think you are absolutely right to stay away from the Admiral's. The way that old man dogs your footsteps is positively revolting, but—(*With insinuating smile, kneeling on stool below sofa. Fatuously.*)—But, you might come on to

the Philharmonic Concert afterwards. Don't you think so? (*Laughs idiotically*) Don't you think so?

CELIA. (*Shaking her head sadly*) Not to-night, Mr. Raleigh. Not to-night. (*Exits R. 1 E.*)

RALEIGH. Oh, very well, it's about time for me to be getting along. (*Crosses quickly to door L.*) I shall see you all at the Admiral's. (*Exits quickly, closing door*)

FARADAY. God bless my soul! I thought he came to give some of us a lift.

MADGE and EVELYN. Why, yes.

(AUNT IDA enters quickly through morning room and comes down R. C.; looking about her.)

AUNT IDA. (*Gayly*) Hope I am not last.

FARADAY. Well, you are.

(PHYLLIS and TARVER enter, TARVER in evening dress with his hat and overcoat and atlas. PHYLLIS with her wraps. TARVER goes to head of table R. and studies his atlas. PHYLLIS sits on fender.)

AUNT IDA. (*Looking about and fastening her gloves*) Well, Celia is not down yet.

MADGE. Celia isn't coming.

AUNT IDA. What!

(SMITH comes down stage to L. of AUNT IDA.)

FARADAY. (*Coming down L. C. with SMITH*) Ida, this is Colonel Vavasour. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Chisholm Faraday. (*To SMITH*) Who has been, I may say, more than a mother to our poor Celia through all this, more than a mother.

SMITH. I am delighted to make your acquaintance. (*Shakes her warmly by the hand*) Friends of Miss Faraday have a claim upon me, which can never be obliterated from my mind.

AUNT IDA. (*Briskly*) I am sure it is very pleasant to know that. But, why?

(SMITH C., AUNT IDA *to his right.*)

FARADAY. Colonel Vavasour has just returned from Somaliland.

AUNT IDA. (*In horror*) What!!

MADGE. From Somaliland.

AUNT IDA. (*Involuntarily*) But why did he do that?

(SMITH *looks at FARADAY.*)

FARADAY. Eh?—I don't think you understand, Ida. Colonel Vavasour is here—I may say—on an errand of mercy. He brings us news of our poor—gallant—lost friend—Smith.

AUNT IDA. S-S-Smith—?

FARADAY. Colonel Smith.

MADGE. Celia's Colonel Smith.

TARVER. (*Coming c. at back with atlas, beckoning to FARADAY, who joins him, and together they look over the atlas, FARADAY explaining something to TARVER*) Colonel Vavasour knew him quite well.

AUNT IDA. (*In awe-struck voice*) You—knew—the—Co—Co—Colonel?

SMITH. My dearest friend. I bring to Miss Faraday a few trinkets he habitually wore and his last dying message.

AUNT IDA. (*Wildly. Stands rigidly, staring at SMITH*) Trinkets!! A message!! (*During the following speech, AUNT IDA gradually becomes more and more hysterical, culminating in a series of wild shrieks of hysterical laughter and grotesque movements of her arms and body*)

SMITH. A long message. He used to lie in his sick bed, gazing across the thatched roofs of Berbera to the Arab dhows, riding at their anchors in the sea. and—

(AUNT IDA, by now, is shrieking wildly and waving her arms above. MADGE runs frightened across the L. of AUNT IDA and PHYLLIS runs down from fender to R. of AUNT IDA, and together they help her into chair to L. of table R. TARVER and FARADAY look up suddenly, startled. SMITH goes up L. C., concealing laughter. PHYLLIS stands R. of chair below sofa, trying to hold AUNT IDA'S hand. EVELYN runs excitedly and aimlessly about, looking for smelling salts. FARADAY runs up and down extreme L., waving his arms. MADGE above chair, fanning AUNT IDA. TARVER C., fanning AUNT IDA with atlas. He kneels and fans her more vigorously. They all talk excitedly to each other, such as, "What has happened to your Aunt Ida?" "God bless my soul, can't you do something for your Aunt?" "She is having a fit," "Go for a Doctor," "Fan her, fan her," "Get some water," etc., etc. During all this, AUNT IDA is still shrieking.)

PHYLLIS. (At a signal from AUNT IDA) The shock has been too much for her.

MADGE. She's so devoted to Celia.

(AUNT IDA whoops.)

FARADAY. Get some vinegar.

(AUNT IDA whoops.)

EVELYN. No, smelling salts.

(AUNT IDA whoops.)

TARVER. (Rising) Oh, hold it upside down!

FARADAY. Nonsense, that's for drowning.

TARVER. Here, I know a remedy.

(MADGE takes TARVER'S place at L. of chair and TARVER goes up above chair, gets spray from table, leans over AUNT IDA'S shoulder and sprays her forehead.)

SMITH. (Comes down C.) Slap her hands hard. That always brings them to.

(PHYLLIS and MADGE slap AUNT IDA'S hands vigorously.)

AUNT IDA. (Pushing them away) It doesn't do anything of the kind.

(MADGE goes L. C. and helps EVELYN on with evening wraps.)

SMITH. There, what did I tell you? (Goes up stage and to table L.)

(TARVER goes R. above sofa. PHYLLIS goes R. between sofa and fender.)

AUNT IDA. (Rises weakly) Oh—oh—oh—oh—oh—oh! This must be broken to Celia.

FARADAY. (Going up and getting his coat and hat from piano stool) Celia already knows.

PHYLLIS. (Pouting) She and Colonel Vavasour are going to stay home and dine together. (Goes up to TARVER and talks)

AUNT IDA. (Gasping) Dine together!! And discuss S-S-Smith!! (CELIA enters in mourning, —black shawl and dress—door R. 1. She closes door, comes a few steps on stage and stands with folded hands and downcast eyes. AUNT IDA is now thoroughly bewildered) Celia, you're in black! (Waves her hand up and down weakly)

CELIA. Yes, dear. I made a mistake when I said I shouldn't allow this news to interfere. I was wrong.

Colonel Vavasour has shown me how deeply he was grieved by my neglect of the trappings of distress.

(NOTE:—*The bodice of the black dress CELIA wears, which is completely hidden by the black shawl, should be of some bright color, to be disclosed in ACT III.*)

AUNT IDA. (*With a long wail*) Will somebody pinch me, please? (*Sits*)

TARVER. (*Coming to foot of sofa and kneeling*) Let me do it for you, won't you?

(MARTIN enters through L. 1 with army list on tray. Comes to FARADAY.)

AUNT IDA. Certainly not.

TARVER. (*Rising and going back to head of sofa*) So sorry.

MARTIN. The wagonette is at the door, sir.

(EVELYN and MADGE cross to door L., bidding good-night to COLONEL SMITH and exit.)

FARADAY. Very well, what have you got there, Martin?

MARTIN. Another army list, sir.

SMITH. (*Above table L. C. Seeing army list*) Oh, damn!

FARADAY. All right, put it on the table. (MARTIN puts army list on table, crosses R. and exits through morning room, turning on lights in morning room) Now then, off we go. (*Counting*) One, two, three, four. (*To PHYLLIS and TARVER*) No hanging behind, you two. (TARVER and PHYLLIS cross quickly L. to door) Got your atlas, Tarver?

TARVER. Yes, sir.

(PHYLLIS and TARVER exit, nodding good-night to COLONEL SMITH.)



FARADAY. Then, off we go. (*Coming down to AUNT IDA'S chair, helping her up and supporting her. AUNT IDA, who is now in a thoroughly demoralized condition, weakly and brokenly, emits little gasps. The feathers in her hair have fallen over one eye. She also shows other traces of her recent fit. FARADAY lifts her up, puts his arm around her waist and leads her across the stage, FARADAY above her. CELIA follows her as far as chair R. of table L., where she remains*) Come along, Ida. This has been a little too much for you. Nothing like fresh air for an attack like yours. You will be all right when you get out in the fresh air. (*AUNT IDA crosses with him quickly, but haltingly, still emitting little gasps. When she gets almost to the door, she looks back at CELIA'S dress and with a final burst, exits. FARADAY at door*) My daughter will appreciate these quiet, I may say, these holy hours—with you, Colonel Vavasour.

SMITH. (*Comes down L. c.*) I appreciate them, sir.

(*FARADAY exits L. 1 E., closing door after him.*

*MARTIN enters through morning room.*)

MARTIN. Dinner is served, Miss. (*Exits through morning room*)

(*Clock off L. Upper, chimes eight.*)

SMITH. Eight!

CELIA. And your train goes at ten.

SMITH. Yes. We shall have two long hours to talk of Smith. (*Offers CELIA his arm. CELIA takes it and they go slowly up to morning room*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

## ACT III.

SCENE:—*It is two hours later in the morning room.*

*At center back are large recess double doors with muslin curtains on lower half and chintz curtains on upper half. When the doors are opened, a portion of the room of the preceding acts can be seen. Directly at back is seen the table, on which stands the book slide, containing the army list. The table runs across stage. Behind and to the R. of this and against the back drop is seen the cabinet of the preceding act. Directly behind table is a chair. The fire glow comes from the R. The back drop should be that portion of the L. wall of the preceding set, showing large picture hung as before. At the left of the set proper, reaching from the floor almost to the ceiling, a semi-circular conservatory window curves out into the room. In this are palms and flowers, with a greenery backing. Recessed into L. first flat is a china closet, containing china and bric-à-brac. Balancing this in R. 1, is a door leading to the hall. Balancing the conservatory is a large recessed window, muslin curtains on the lower sash and chintz curtains on the upper. Damask hangings over window and also over doors C. All of these hangings are looped back. In the window is set a window box containing flowers. In the center of the window is a small sewing table. Below it and facing it, a winged arm-chair; above it and facing it, another small arm-chair. On the table are a lamp and some flowers. Against back flat and to left of window is a small serving table, on which are an empty silver serving tray, a small tray and a small decanter of brandy and two liquor glasses on it.*

To left of double doors is a chair. R. of conservatory, a chintz-covered stool. Below conservatory, a three-winged, chintz-covered screen. Below this and about three feet from L. flat is a desk, running up and down stage; the lower end being slightly more on stage. On this, on the extreme upper end, is a telephone. Also on the desk are ink well, pens, paper and envelopes. On the elevated portion of the upper end is a lamp. Below desk, a waste paper basket. In the center of the stage and well down is a small, round dinner table, with cloth. On the table are a cigarette box, a cigarette lighter, (burning) two ash trays, plates, doilies and finger bowls containing water, fruit knives and forks, a nut-cracker, and an almond dish. Directly in the center of the table is a fruit basket, containing apples, grapes and peaches. One peach should be easily accessible, it being used by COLONEL SMITH. At the upper end of table are two shaded, lighted candles, between these a vase with flowers. At CELIA'S place to the R. is a claret glass, stained at the bottom to represent a residue of wine. At SMITH'S place, are a clean claret glass and a high-ball glass, containing a small quantity of whiskey and soda. On either side of the table are chairs. On the back flat, to each side of the doors, are candle brackets. Before curtain rises, the clock off stage (same as used in previous act) chimes ten. Curtain rises on the first stroke, after the usual Westminster prelude. Dinner is over. The lamps are lit and doors at back closed. CELIA sits to R. of table, dipping her fingers in finger bowl. She is in the black dress and shawl of the preceding act. SMITH is to the left. He is intent upon explaining something to CELIA, and she is listening with most apparent interest. At rise of curtain.

SMITH. (*Continuing his description*) It was the usual sort of formation when a small force gets caught in the open—a square with the maxims at the corners. We had only two,—one—here—at the tip of the nutcrackers, and the other here—at the end of a knife-handle. (*He has made a square with dessert knives and nutcrackers on the table-cloth. To illustrate the position of the maxims he uses nuts*)

CELIA. Only two!

SMITH. We should have liked some more, of course. But we'd have gotten along all right if this fellow here—(*Touching one of the nuts*) hadn't jammed.

CELIA. Oh! What happened then?

SMITH. The Somalis at the corner charged. From here, from here, from here, others swept round and flung themselves upon the back of their companions. Imagine a huge wedge and an enormous hammer pounding behind it. They split our ranks in a second. It was a surprise that took you by the throat. You heard the maxim talking to 'em like a father, and, by George, there they were in the hollow of the square, stabbing at our backs.

CELIA. (*With much admiration*) Oh—and where were you?

SMITH. (*In square*) Here.

CELIA. There?

SMITH. Yes. (*He takes a peach*) That's me. (*Places it in the square*)

CELIA. Ah! There! You were there?

SMITH. Oh, I was all right. We faced the rear ranks about and drove 'em out of it. It was messy. You see, we could only use the bayonet inside the square. In a little while we got the maxim going again and made 'em respectful. However they hung around us and we couldn't move along very fast. That was our trouble. For we had to move along, we were short of water and a day's march from the wells.

CELIA. Oh!

SMITH. So, you see, it was necessary that as soon as night came, someone should get through and bring relief.

CELIA. (*With much appreciation*) I know what happened. I know!—You volunteered——

SMITH. (*Looks at her; his eyes accept her homage and thank her. He laughs happily*) Yes. Between you and me—it was safer outside the square.

CELIA. (*Reproachfully*) Oh—!

SMITH. Well—I wasn't in command. So I could volunteer.

CELIA. And got the D. S. O. in consequence.

SMITH. And a drink a day before the others. I'll get a step, too, I think.

CELIA. Then you'll be general, won't you?

SMITH. Brigadier——

CELIA. (*Smiling at him admiringly*) You can't know what it means to a woman who has lived always in a little out-of-the-way place like this, where only the same ordinary things happen day after day, to hear of wonderful deeds like these—from a man who's done them! (*Speaks earnestly, without gushing*)

(SMITH beams, moves his chair slightly towards her.)

SMITH. Oh, yes. We are getting along together capitally, aren't we? And you can't know how all this—(*Moves his hand to include the room*) appeals to a man who finds the skirmish and the camp a bit of an old story, and realizes that this—the quiet, well-ordered household—the home—and the home-maker—is after all, what is really worth fighting for.

CELIA. (*Leans forward, listening*) But—surely you have a home?

SMITH. I have a house—By Jove! Now I have two houses!

CELIA. (*Interested*) You have just bought another place?

SMITH. Inherited it. An old Abbey about the size of Trafalgar Square on a wet day—and not as cheerful.

CELIA. But you mustn't let yourself be lonely. You ought to marry.

SMITH. (*Moves his chair closer to CELIA*) That's what I begin to think.

(*MARTIN enters R. with tray. On it, two small cups, small sugar bowl and a coffee pot, also one cigarette for CELIA.*)

CELIA. (*Seeing MARTIN*) Won't you have a cigarette? (*Offering SMITH cigarette box*)

SMITH. (*Takes cigarette and moves back*) Thank you.

MARTIN. (*Placing coffee on the table*) Coffee, Miss.

CELIA. Sugar?

SMITH. Thanks, yes.

MARTIN. (*Has taken up CELIA's plate and finger bowl in right hand and now takes SMITH's plate and finger bowl*) Old brandy, sir?

SMITH. Old brandy! By George, yes! (*Lights cigarette*)

(*MARTIN goes up to small serving table R. of door and puts plates and finger bowls on tray and gets brandy tray which he brings down to table and pours out one glass, leaving brandy on table. He takes the napkins, goes up, puts them on tray with other things and exits with tray R. 1.*)

CELIA. (*While MARTIN is serving*) I asked Martin to serve coffee here, because I thought it would be cosier, you know. (*Having poured SMITH's coffee, she passes cup to him*)

SMITH. (*Taking cup slowly from her*) Much—much cosier; though, for both of us to-night, (*CELIA*

*fills her cup*) our one idea of cosiness must be the grave.

(CELIA drops pot on tray.)

CELIA. (*Leans forward, takes cigarette from coffee tray and lights it*) The grave! Then, tell me of it, won't you? Where does it lie?

SMITH. (*Openly perplexed, sees CELIA smoking and attempts to use this as a means of extricating himself. Pretending to be shocked*) Oh! the grave! oh——

CELIA. What's the matter? (*Puffs her cigarette*).

SMITH. (*Shrugging his shoulders*) Oh, nothing, nothing.

CELIA. Do you object to women smoking?

SMITH. I? Not at all. It's companionable, but Smith—(CELIA chokes on cigarette) would Smith have liked to see you smoking a cigarette?

CELIA. (*Annoyed, pauses*) Perhaps not—to-night.

SMITH. Not to-night and not any night. (CELIA viciously presses cigarette down on ash tray and puts it out. *Reprovingly*) We both know how strongly he disapproved of the modern latitude of women's manners. (*She turns away*) You know I'd fancy the man who could make you care for him would be quite different from Smith. You haven't his little shut-in way of looking at life. You have such a splendid imagination.

CELIA. (*Nervously*) Yes, and I'm beginning to think I need one.

SMITH. Did you really love each other?

CELIA. (*Takes up her coffee cup*) I can't answer for Colonel Smith—who was a man you know. But for myself, I can truthfully say that I have thought of him every day for eight months. Thought of him— Yes! And *written* to him too.

SMITH. (*Startled*) Written to him! By Jove then! Where are those letters? You can't let things

like that go astray. Letters from *you*—knocking loose about a camp! (*He is upset and disturbed*)

CELIA. (*Smiling to herself*) Why should you imagine—my letters never reached him?

SMITH. (*Smiling reminiscently*) Because I was with him—when he got the first one.

CELIA. (*Very agitated. Puts her cup sharply on saucer*) You—you—you don't mean to say a Colonel Smith ever received— Oh—no gentleman *could* have shown my letter.

SMITH. (*Sincerely*) Shown it? Oh, Miss Faraday, you can't know what that letter of *yours* means to—

CELIA. (*Turning on him quickly*) I beg your pardon.

SMITH. I mean *did meant*—I mean *did mean*—to good old Smith. (*Leaning forward with a smile. Moves his chair below table a little closer to hers*) I say, I've an idea. Let's forget Smith for five minutes and talk of something else.

CELIA. (*Forgetting herself*) Oh, yes! Do let's.

SMITH. What shall we talk about?

CELIA. (*Very engagingly*) You. You have hardly said a word yet about yourself—and—naturally I am interested. (*Speaks with a smile. Face on L. hand*)

(SMITH *edges toward her, delighted, R. elbow on table, face on hand.*)

SMITH. I was born—guess when?

CELIA. Thirty years ago.

SMITH. (*Holding out box*) Have a cigarette?

CELIA. No, thank you. I'd rather not. Do you think Smith would have liked me to smoke?

SMITH. Ah, you see, we can't get away from him. He dominates us. Living or dead, his imperious nature will not be neglected. He sits at the table here between you and me. (*Designates a spot between*



*them on table*) To satisfy him, we've got to talk about him.

CELIA. What is there to say?

SMITH. What is there to say! And you've told me nothing about the Smith you knew.

CELIA. (*Surprised*) The Smith I knew? (*Recovering herself*) Oh, yes, of course.

SMITH. Yes—you see I know him only as the soldier—the man of action—the fighting man—but you—

CELIA. But there is nothing to tell.

SMITH. (*Strongly*) You mean there is nothing you wish to tell.

CELIA. (*Defiantly*) Certainly not. What is it you wish to know?

SMITH. Let us compare our pictures—mental of course—of the man. (*With solicitude*)

CELIA. Oh, no—not at all. Not at all.

SMITH. Then you describe Smith as you saw him, and I'll tell you if I agree with you.

CELIA. Of course, you know our descriptions won't be alike. No two people's description of anyone ever would be.

SMITH. Of course not—except in the definite facts.—His eyes, for instance—

CELIA. His eyes—his eyes were not definite.

SMITH. Not definite?

CELIA. Their color, I mean it varied. Emotion kindled them—apathy dulled them. Sometimes they were light and again they were very, very dark.

SMITH. That's funny. I never saw them dark. To me they always were light, like bottle glass.

CELIA. Really? Possibly you were not very observing.

SMITH. (*Acknowledges the point with a touch of impatience*) Possibly not. But his hair? Surely we can't differ as to that?

CELIA. His hair—you mean did it curl or was it straight?

SMITH. Yes—and its color.

CELIA. His hair—I hardly know how to describe his hair, because his hair was—. It was like no hair that I ever saw.

SMITH. (*Laughs*) That's a splendid description of a bald man. That always was a great grief to Smith, his baldness; his head was so very bald and bumpy.

CELIA. Oh, yes.

SMITH. (*Puts his hand to his head*) What! (*Recovering himself*) Oh, yes, yes. (*Growing more and more determined to trip her and more and more interested in and appreciative of her attractiveness*) Now his mouth—

CELIA. Well. His mouth was peculiar—

SMITH. Peculiar?

CELIA. Yes, you see it broadened when he smiled.

SMITH. (*Laughing*) Oh—did he smile for you?

CELIA. Oh, often, very often.

SMITH. Yes, we all do—don't we? What would you say of his voice?

CELIA. It was kind, always kind.

SMITH. (*Shakes head*) Gruff and commanding.

CELIA. (*Insinuatingly*) Naturally—not to me. (*Her hand rests on the table*)

SMITH. (*Slowly covering her hand with his*) No, no—how could it be?

CELIA. (*Looking over their hands to the spot that SMITH has indicated earlier*) Do you feel he's sitting there still?

SMITH. (*Leaning towards her*) You're surely not afraid of—Wobbles?

CELIA. (*Pushes chair back, sliding with it as far up stage as possible. Faintly*) Did you say—Wobbles?

SMITH. (*Briskly*) You surely knew his nickname?

CELIA. (*Openly perplexed*) But I—I called him—Wobbles. (*Stares at SMITH*).

SMITH. Why! All the Army called him—Wobbles.

CELIA. (*In dry, queer voice*) I didn't know *that*.

(*READY 3RD BORDER.*)

SMITH. He was the most popular fellow—! You won't go to a dance or a garden party for the rest of your life—there won't be a town in the United Kingdom, Miss Faraday, where you won't meet somebody, some old school-fellow, some brother-officer, who knew him—who will understand your loss and tell you new details of Wobbles. (*Rises*)

CELIA. (*Rises and comes down stage*) Not if I know it! (*SMITH stares at her. Returning, getting her chair and replacing it at table*) Colonel Vavasour—I mean it will be quite impossible for me—to indulge myself in any such fashion. Because just as soon as possible, I'm sailing for America.

SMITH. (*Dropping below table*) America? Why, Smith has—four brothers *ranching* there. And five—I mean *three*—sisters-in-law. I congratulate you, Miss Faraday. (*Offers CELIA his hand. CELIA takes it limply and he shakes it*) You are going to the very heart of poor Wobbles' family. Shan't I cable them to meet you at the dock?

(*They are both now in front of table.*)

CELIA. (*Withdrawing her hand*) No—no—no—no please don't do anything like that.

SMITH. Why not?

CELIA. Well, I don't know, but I—I might get off the ship *before it reaches* New York. At all events I am going where *no one can ever find me*.

SMITH. (*Quickly, but quite seriously*) Then—by Jove—I'm going there too. (*Takes her left hand tenderly and leans forward. They look straight into each other's eyes for a moment*)

CELIA. (*Draws herself up*) Aren't you forgetting

yourself, Colonel Vavasour? (*With an irresistible impulse of mischief*) Or are you only forgetting Wobbles? (*Crosses c. to table. Looking back at spot on table*)

(*THIRD BORDER FULL UP.*)

(*A gay chatter is heard off L. of party returning from concert.*)

SMITH. (*Not hearing it*) Oh, damn Wobbles. (*Crosses L.*) I'm going because—(*The center doors open quickly. GRICE, STEELE, FARADAY, TARVER and PHYLLIS, EVELYN, RALEIGH and AUNT IDA are in the door-way, having come from the left. Conscious of the presence of returning party, SMITH reverts to his tone of solemnity and CELIA bows her head with grief. FARADAY, in door-way, hearing SMITH, turns and raises his hands to quiet the party. GRICE and AUNT IDA have drifted down L. ahead of the others. AUNT IDA sinks wearily into chair by desk*) Hour by hour, he lay on his sick bed, looking out across the—thatched roofs of Berbera to the Arab—(*GRICE sneezes loudly. Turning*) Good Lord, what's that? (*The others come down in the following order. STEELE, RALEIGH and EVELYN come down R.; PHYLLIS and TARVER up C.; FARADAY to R. of CELIA; MADGE by AUNT IDA'S chair. GRICE has gone down L. C. Some of the party are carrying programs. The doors are left open*) In the midst of our sad communings, how strangely out of place are these revelers.

ONNES. Revelers?

SMITH. They come flushed with new wine.

GRICE. New wine? They dined with me, sir.

CELIA. (*Turning to FARADAY*) Was the concert a success?

FARADAY. Of course, it was. *We* were there. (*Goes up stage*)

GRICE. (*Plaintively*) We missed you, Celia.

SMITH. Miss Faraday couldn't go without hearing Colonel Smith's last message.

(AUNT IDA *laughs hysterically.*)

FARADAY. (*Crossing to AUNT IDA. Sternly*) Not again, Ida, not again.

(AUNT IDA *relapses into a state of semi-oblivion.*)

SMITH. It's not nearly ended yet.

STEELE. Well, she has had over two hours to hear it in.

SMITH. (*Scornfully*) Two hours? It was a *long* message. He lay for *weeks* on his sick-bed gazing across the thatched roof of Berbera to—watching—

RALEIGH. Oh, yes, watching the Arab cows feeding at their anchors.

SMITH. Dhows, man, dhows!

RALEIGH. Well, dhows or cows, I don't care. And as for Smith I tell you, I am fed with the fellow.

(CELIA *explodes into laughter, covers her face with handkerchief, and sits R. of table.*)

STEELE. (*Thinking CELIA is crying*) You brute! You— You blundering idiot!

TARVER. (*Coming down R. of CELIA*) Even now he's *dead*, he's kept you from the concert to-night. My agent told me that we just shouldn't do it. He expects I will lose by a hundred votes.

FARADAY. How's that?

CELIA. (*Looking up quickly*) Oh, no, Bobby, it's not too late, we'll help you. (*Rises and crosses to SMITH, who is R.*)

SMITH. I am at your service, Miss Faraday.

TARVER. (*To SMITH, eagerly*) And you're some good—aren't you? (*Goes up to PHYLLIS back c.*)

FARADAY. We may call on you later, Vavasour.

SMITH. Do. Do.

FARADAY. (*Taking ADMIRAL by the arm and going*) Come along, Admiral. Come and have a cigar, and we'll talk it over. (*Spoken off stage R.*) Smith or no Smith, we must win this seat.

TARVER. (*Taking PHYLLIS' arm*) Madge—Evelyn. Let's go and count the names of the hundred beasts who won't vote for me.

(PHYLLIS and TARVER and MADGE move to door C. and exit R.)

EVELYN. (*Who has moved up to door, turns in door. Coquettishly to STEELE and RALEIGH*) I'm afraid I can't count—without some big, strong man to help me.

RALEIGH. (*Looking round*) Ask Steele. He took all the 'rithmetic prizes at his kindergarten.

STEELE. (*Looking round*) I'll come in one minute, Lady Trenchard. There's something on my program, I must show to Miss Faraday. (*Indicating program*)

EVELYN. (*At door*) Well—! When Celia has quite done with all of you—(*Exit rapidly*)

(*Clock chimes half hour. A moment after EVELYN has gone off, she presumably switches off lights in room off C.—then 3rd border is put out and no light except glow from fire remains. The doors remain wide open.*)

RALEIGH. Half past ten! I thought Colonel Vavasour's train left at ten, Miss Faraday.

CELIA. (*Confused*) Oh, did it?

SMITH. (*Coolly*) Well, didn't it? And in any case, Mr. Faraday's clock is wrong.

STEELE. (*Taking out his watch*) Wrong? Not a bit of it.

RALEIGH. (*Also takes out his watch*) I make it 10:32. (*Ironically*) Perhaps your watch will correct me, Colonel Vavasour.

SMITH. (*Crosses R. C. Absent-mindedly feels for his watch and starts as he realizes his mistake. CELIA sees this and the true situation flashes on her. She swings up stage for a moment to cover her shock and embarrassment and then returns and faces SMITH, as she leans against the chair L. of table. RALEIGH and STEELE have turned to each other and are discussing the situation, for the moment ignoring CELIA and SMITH. As CELIA faces SMITH, he flounders through his explanation*) Well, you see, I—I—I—I—I left my watch in town to be cleaned. It ran too fast.

CELIA. (*Sarcastically*) Like the inventive genius of its owner, perhaps, and your scarf pin; no doubt, you've taken advantage of this period of mourning to have all your jewelry attended to. (*Turns away R.*)

SMITH. Miss Faraday, please——

CELIA. (*Turning back*) Colonel Vavasour, I think you said your name was. You will allow me, won't you, to lend you the watch you so kindly brought from poor Colonel Smith. Otherwise, you know, you might be a very long time without your own, and since your grief must now be lessened, by having shared it with me, perhaps you might be induced to mitigate your mourning and wear his pin. Do let me send them to you. And I'll include a little nursery fable which perhaps you know, called, "The Tortoise and the Hare," because I think—I've caught up. Now, I'll say good-night to you, Colonel Vavasour, and good-bye.

SMITH. (*Seriously*) Good-bye?

CELIA. (*Moving to c. and speaking to RALEIGH*) There is a midnight train to town?

RALEIGH. Oh, yes.

CELIA. (*To SMITH*) I'm quite sure that Mr. Steele and Mr. Raleigh will be happy to drop you at the station on their way home.

STEELE. Delighted!

CELIA. (*To RALEIGH, shaking hands*) So sorry to hurry you away.

RALEIGH. Oh, I shall see you to-morrow, Miss Faraday.

CELIA. Yes, do. (*Nods good-night to STEELE*)

AUNT IDA. (*Who is still at desk, her head resting wearily on her hands. Sleepily*) Everybody going?

CELIA. (*Crosses L.*) Yes, dear, Colonel Vavasour is. (*Crosses to AUNT IDA*)

SMITH. Is there nothing left unsaid? Is there nothing left for me to say but good-bye?

CELIA. (*Over her shoulder*) Nothing.

SMITH. (*Bows. Speaks in a brisk, matter-of-fact way, as he crosses c. d.*) Well, since you two fellows are kind enough to offer me a lift. (*Exits, followed by RALEIGH and STEELE, who go off, chatting ad. lib. and closing door*)

(*Warn electrician for lights out.*)

CELIA. (*Tearing off her black shawl, waving it in the air, and throwing herself in the chair L. of table, her back to the audience, disclosing her gay and décolleté bodice*) Oh—h-h-h-h! Oh—h-h-h-h! Oh—h-h-h-h! Oh—h-h-h-h!

AUNT IDA. (*Going to CELIA*) Celia, what have you been up to, now?

CELIA. Oh, when I think of it, Aunt Ida! "The Arab dhows riding at their anchors," and how I told him— Oh, Heavens—how I told him he ought to marry. Oh—h-h-h-h! Oh—h-h-h-h!

AUNT IDA. Celia Faraday! (*Goes up to her and catches her by both shoulders*) Are you mad? I vow I've a great mind to shake you.



CELIA. I wish you would, Aunt Ida. I wish you would. (*Looking toward door R.*) I don't believe it. I don't believe it. I don't believe what I do believe. For Heaven's sake, dear, go and fetch me the army list, so that I may make sure of what an awful fool I've been, and if what I believe is true, let me sit like this in the dark. (*Goes up and presses switch and sits in chair L. of door. Lights out*)—All the rest of my life and blush and blush and blush until my cheeks drop off from blushing.

(AUNT IDA comes L. of CELIA'S chair. There is only the moonlight now in the morning room, with a shaft of moonlight shining through window R. on CELIA. The library, seen through the wide open doors, is lit up by the glow from the fire.)

AUNT IDA. Are you mad? (*Starts to exit to get army list. Sees SMITH and draws away R.*) Hush—sh-sh-sh.

(SMITH in an ulster is seen to cross cautiously at back to table. He lights two or three matches at once and looks through book-slide for army list. Finding this, he takes it and smiles in a satisfied manner, and holding the match to the list, moves off stage R. CELIA and AUNT IDA peer after him. A flicker is seen on the walls and furniture of the room off stage, as of the book burning. After a pause, CELIA rises and stands C. in doorway, facing audience.)

CELIA. The army list!

AUNT IDA. Now, he's thrown the army list into the fire. (*Ready Motor Horn*) Celia—has Colonel Vavasour gone mad too?

CELIA. So! He thinks he can prevent my finding out, does he? That I can't be absolutely sure until to-morrow? Well—(*Rushes off R.*)

AUNT IDA. Perhaps we are all mad—mad as hatters. (*Goes R. and presses light switch*)

(*LIGHTS UP.*)

CELIA. (*Off stage*) Army lists don't burn as suddenly as that, I know. (*At door*) I have burned too many of them. (*Reappears, carrying the partly burned army list in tongs. She comes in blowing at the burning book*) Blow, Aunt Ida, blow! (*AUNT IDA joins her. They both blow to put out the sparks*) Only the A's are burnt, Aunt Ida, only the A's. (*Goes down L. of table, drops book on table, and hands the tongs to AUNT IDA*)

AUNT IDA. (*Waving the tongs*) Only the A's. Ha! Ha! Only the A's.

(*Motor horn is heard off R. 3.*)

CELIA. What's that, Aunt Ida, what's that?

AUNT IDA. It's Mr. Raleigh's motor.

CELIA. (*With an outburst of relief*) Well, then, he's gone, isn't he, he's gone.

AUNT IDA. Yes, he's gone, he's gone!

CELIA. (*Picks up book and runs through it*) V-V-V-V-V — Vallance — Valpey — Vanderfeldt — Varley—not a Vavasour.

AUNT IDA. Celia!

CELIA. (*Throwing down book*) Not one in the whole army list. No? Not the tiniest little bit of a one.

AUNT IDA. (*Flourishing tongs more wildly*) Then who is he? What did he come here for?

CELIA. I don't know, but he's gone now, isn't he? *He's gone!*

AUNT IDA. I know he's gone, but what did he come here for? (*CELIA looks at her. A light breaks over her*) Celia Faraday! That man—had your letter—in his pocket. He told Phyllis he had your

letter! I thought it strange! Then Colonel Vavasour isn't Colonel Vavasour. (*Sits R. of table*)

CELIA. No!

AUNT IDA. *He's Colonel Smith.*

CELIA. Yes.

AUNT IDA. *He's—*

CELIA. (*In the smallest possible voice*)—My Wobbles! (*Enter FARADAY R. 1 E.*) Father, dear, has Colonel Vavasour gone?

FARADAY. No, my dear.

CELIA. What!!!!

FARADAY. I was fortunate enough to catch him at the door.

(*AUNT IDA drops tongs on floor beside her R.*)

CELIA. But, Father, what ever possessed you to ask him to stay? (*Crosses L. Sits*)

FARADAY. You know he offered to help us. Things are looking pretty black for Tarver. We need all the help we can get at this mass meeting in the morning. So I have persuaded Colonel Vavasour to stop over and take the noon train.

(*FARADAY turns toward door R. 1 and proudly ushers in SMITH. CELIA and AUNT IDA turn their heads away, much discomfited.*)

FARADAY. (*Taking SMITH by the arm and passing him across him*) A room must be prepared at once. Has Mrs. Brown gone to bed yet?

CELIA. (*Still seated L. of table. Haughtily*) I don't know, Father. She frequently goes to bed.

FARADAY. Eh?

CELIA. (*Confused*) I mean, *early*.

FARADAY. (*As SMITH goes C.*) Good-for-nothing old person, that house-keeper. Come with me. I'll look out for you myself. (*They walk toward door*)

c.) We'll be back presently, Celia, to say good-night to you and your Aunt. (*They exit c. doors to L. Off stage*) Tell Martin to bring in whiskey and soda.

CELIA. (*After a pause*) Did you hear that, Aunt Ida?

AUNT IDA. (*Wearily*) Uh-huh.

CELIA. "Stay here for the night and then take the noon train." That's *our* train, Aunt Ida—the noon train. Isn't this an awful situation. Now, what are we going to do?

AUNT IDA. (*Still more wearily*) I don't know.

CELIA. I can't face that man again, after—I can't. I have got to get out of this house myself, *to-night*, some way, somehow. (*Rushes up to c. doors, closing and locking them*) How can I manage it. Think, Aunt Ida. Think—think—think—think—think.

AUNT IDA. (*Disgustedly*) Think—think—think—think—think. I can't think. My poor old head won't stand much more of this.

CELIA. (*Coming down back of AUNT IDA and putting her arms about her*) I've got it. Since he's going to take *our* train, there's nothing left for us to do but take *his*.

AUNT IDA. (*Startled*) What?

CELIA. Yes, that midnight train. I don't care where it goes or if it ever gets there. We'll manage to reach Southampton somehow before to-morrow night. The thing is to get away from here as quickly as possible. We must hurry terribly. It's nearly eleven now. We can have a compartment to ourselves. I'll see if Wilson is still at the station. (*Crossing to telephone on desk*) He'll tell us all about it.

AUNT IDA. (*Protesting*) I'm only half packed.

CELIA. That doesn't matter. I'm not packed at all. Kent's a jewel. She will stay up all night, pack everything, and follow us in the morning. (*Rings*

*telephone and lifts off receiver*) Hello! Are you there?

AUNT IDA. (*Still protesting*) My tailor suit has gone to the cleaner's and won't be home till morning. I've nothing to wear.

CELIA. There is no time to wear anything. We must go without any clothes.

AUNT IDA. What!!

CELIA. Except motor coats, I mean. We've got to go as we are. (*Into telephone*) Hello! Yes, but me through to the station, quick, please. I want to speak to Wilson. (*To AUNT IDA*) Now, don't worry, Aunt Ida, I will bundle you up warmly.

AUNT IDA. I'll *have* to have something to eat. I have had nothing since morning. I couldn't eat a bite at the dinner and I feel so gone and faint.

CELIA. Well, if you're feeling faint, dear, take a drink of that brandy. That'll do you good.

AUNT IDA. Oh, no. I'm not addicted to the use of those things.

CELIA. But, if you're faint, you need it. (*Into the telephone*) Hello! Hello! Is that you, Wilson?

AUNT IDA. But I do feel very faint.

CELIA. Just a minute, Wilson. (*Puts down receiver and runs across to brandy bottle, picks up bottle and pours it into whiskey and soda glass, while she talks excitedly. She pours the glass half full*) Now, please, dear. Don't be ridiculous at a time like this. You might have one of your dreadful fainting spells in the motor, and I shouldn't know what to do for you. Now, come, come, dear, drink this. (*Rushes to the back of AUNT IDA'S chair and holds the glass while she drinks. AUNT IDA drains the glass, making a wry face and shuddering. CELIA hurriedly puts down glass and flies back to telephone*).

AUNT IDA. If only it doesn't go to my head!

CELIA. Oh, it won't, it won't. (*Into telephone*) Hello, Wilson, are you there? Well listen, this is Miss Faraday. Yes, yes, Miss Celia. I've got to get

away to-night on the midnight train. It's most important and will you look up at once what connections that train makes for Southampton—yes, Southampton. Also please wire Bletchley, and have a compartment reserved for me. What? It will take you ten minutes? Please hurry. There is so little time to spare. (*Replaces receiver*) Now, we must get the motor. (*Springs up from chair and goes up to bell push L. of C. door, rings bell, runs down to R. of AUNT IDA and picks up the tongs from floor*) How do you feel now, Aunt Ida? How do you feel now?

AUNT IDA. Oh, I feel all right.

(*Enter MARTIN R. 1. He stands.*)

MARTIN. Yes, Miss.

CELIA. (*Holding tongs*) Oh, Martin, I want you to jump upstairs—

MARTIN. (*In open amazement*) Jump, Miss?

CELIA. I said, "Jump," and tell Kent to give you two motor coats and any other kind of a wrap she can find, two motor bonnets, some veils and furs and some pins and my motor bag and—two tooth-brushes. We are going for a drive.

MARTIN. A *drive*, Miss?

CELIA. (*Irritated*) I said a *drive*. Will you hurry, please?

(*Ready telephone.*)

MARTIN. Very good, Miss. (*Exit R. 1*)

AUNT IDA. We can't have the motor. We couldn't have it to go to the Admiral's. It's broken.

CELIA. (*Putting tongs in the winged arm-chair*) It wouldn't be a motor, if it wasn't. Now what will we do? Oh, I'll get Jimmie Raleigh and he'll come back and take us down in his. (*Goes to 'phone*) Hello! Hello! I wonder what the—(AUNT IDA

*squeals*) telephone number is. Oh, Aunt Ida, please do be quiet. You know you will make me nervous in a minute.

AUNT IDA. I'm not saying a word.

CELIA. Hello! Hello! Give me Sir William Raleigh's house, please. Yes, I know the family is away, but I want to speak to Mr. James Raleigh. (*Stuffs handkerchief in telephone receiver and turns to AUNT IDA*) Aunt Ida, tell me, do you know, are there any Smiths ranching in Chicago?

AUNT IDA. (*Slightly tipsily*) Smiths? Smiths? I don't know.

CELIA. (*Into telephone*) What? He's not in? (*MARTIN enters with wraps and bags. Crosses back of table to chair L. of table*) Well, have him ring me up directly he comes in—Miss Faraday. Yes, please. (*Puts up telephone. Jumps up, goes to MARTIN, helps him place wraps on chair, takes bag and puts it on floor, beside and to the L. of chair R.*)

(NOTE:—The wraps must be placed across MARTIN'S arms in the following manner: CELIA'S wrap on bottom, then her veil and bonnet. Next comes muff and fur for AUNT IDA. Then the ulster for AUNT IDA and on top her bonnet. The bag is in MARTIN'S hand.)

MARTIN. (*Going c. above table*) Shan't I clear the table, Miss?

CELIA. No, leave it till morning. Don't bother about anything. Go to bed, Martin, go to bed. Good-night.

MARTIN. Thank you, Miss. Good-night. (*Goes L. and exits*)

AUNT IDA. You have forgotten the whiskey and soda.

CELIA. (*Seizes AUNT IDA'S bonnet from pile of wraps and crosses to her above table*) Of course, I have. You don't suppose I'm going to have those

two men back here until we're out of the way. (*Placing bonnet on AUNT IDA'S head from back*) I don't want to hurry you, dear, but we must be ready the minute Mr. Raleigh gets here. (*CELIA is so excited that she gets AUNT IDA'S bonnet on quite to one side, ties a rampant bow under her right ear, then flies up stage and peeps through curtain on door to see if the men are returning. AUNT IDA during this is showing serious signs of the effect of the brandy by grotesque gestures and movements of her head. CELIA returns R. of AUNT IDA*) How do you feel now, Aunt Ida, how do you feel now?

AUNT IDA. (*Quite tipsily*) I never felt like this before, in all my life. I think I've got a chill.

CELIA. A chill? Do you want a little more brandy? (*Goes for decanter*)

AUNT IDA. No—no—no—no.

CELIA. (*Seizing ulster and going back to her*) Then get into this. It will keep you warm while you are waiting. (*She helps AUNT IDA, who is still seated, into the ulster, her right arm first. She then rushes back to chair for fur and muff*)

AUNT IDA. (*Flopping on table*) Oh, Celia! Why do we have to go on this dreadful journey?

CELIA. (*Handing her muff over her shoulder, which AUNT IDA clutches and hugs like a child*) To get to Chicago, dear, to get to Chicago! (*Placing stole around her neck*) And we'll be there almost before you realize it. (*Telephone bell rings. CELIA throws stole quickly around AUNT IDA'S face, almost smothering her, and rushes to telephone*) Hello!—Hello!—What?—Yes, Mr. Raleigh, I did,—Mr. Raleigh, Aunt Ida has just had a cable from Chicago with some very bad news.

AUNT IDA. Oh! Oh!

CELIA. (*To AUNT IDA*) Hush! (*Into telephone*) And she has got to get away to-night on the midnight train. I want to go a little way with her. Won't you come and drive us to the station in your



motor?—What? You will? Oh, that's very kind of you, but don't drive up to the door. (AUNT IDA rises, supporting herself on table) No, stay down by the gate and we'll walk down. (AUNT IDA has moved cautiously around and walks over to the conservatory window) Just blow your horn gently when you get here, so we'll know that you've arrived. We'll go down as quickly as we can. Yes.—Thanks—Yes, yes. (Hangs up receiver and goes for her bonnet. Crosses below table to door R.) How do you feel now, Aunt Ida, how do you feel now?

AUNT IDA. I'm afraid it's a fever, or else I'm dreadfully over-heated. (Sits on stool)

CELIA. (Going to her) You'll be all right, once you're in the fresh air. But, I've got to leave you for a few moments while I run upstairs and get my box of love letters. I can't go away and leave those things behind me. There are about 250 of them by this time. (Going R.) I've been writing to that man every day for eight months.

AUNT IDA. Celia! (CELIA stops. Beckons to her tipsily. CELIA goes to her) Do you know something, Celia. I believe you're half in love with Smith.

CELIA. (Going back R.) You dear old goose, you don't know what you're talking about. I half in love with that man? Half in love with a man who has treated me as *that man* has done? Well—(Going further R.) I hope I'm not quite such a fool as that, Aunt Ida.

AUNT IDA. Oh, oh, oh, oh.

CELIA. (With her back to AUNT IDA) Well, and if I were? Isn't it all the more reason for me to get out of this house before I make a bigger fool of myself? (Goes to door R., which she barely opens when AUNT IDA stops her again)

AUNT IDA. Celia!!! (CELIA turns) I believe—I ought to lie down.

CELIA. (Lets the door slam to and rushes straight across the stage to AUNT IDA) No, Aunt Ida, dear,

you can't do anything like that. You can sleep in the motor and in the train, but you must stay here while I'm gone and listen for Wilson's telephone message and write it down.

AUNT IDA. It's no use. Just five minutes. I must lie down.

CELIA. I won't be a minute.

AUNT IDA. Now, I'm getting cold. Put something around me.

CELIA. Well, here. (*Puts screen in front of her*) This will keep off the draught and you can have the fresh air at the same time, and have a little nap while you're waiting. (*Speaking over her shoulder, she goes R. to door*) No one will disturb you, dear. I've locked that door and will take the key of this one with me and I'll hurry back as fast as I can, Aunt Ida, just as fast as—(*Exits quickly, locking door behind her*)

(*There is a pause. The faint toot of a motor horn is heard off L. AUNT IDA'S hands are seen to grasp the top of the outer wings of the screen, one by one. Her head appears for a moment. She looks about tipsily and then drops suddenly out of sight again. After a pause, a second toot is heard. AUNT IDA rises slowly and carefully and comes out R. of screen. She is extremely puzzled.*)

AUNT IDA. Now what was that? (*Her eye lights on telephone and a smile breaks over her face*) The telephone. Wilson's message. Must write it down. (*Goes carefully and slowly to desk and sits heavily in chair. Takes off receiver and places transmitter to her ear. There is a pause as she listens. A look of terror and surprise creeps over her face*) Now something's the matter with my ears. I can't hear a word they say. I believe I'm paralyzed. Oh, dear. (*Looks helplessly about her*) Why doesn't Celia come

back? (She has taken a pen in her right hand to write down the message. She holds the receiver in her left hand. She looks from one to the other and cannot make up her mind which goes where. She finally decides and elaborately puts the pen in the telephone hooks with a satisfied smile. She then carefully places the receiver on the desk where the pen ought to be) It's no use. This has been a dreadful day. (Slowly and carefully rising and looking tipsily about) If I'm to be good for anything to-night, I will have to lie down, somewhere. (Goes up to doors) If only for five minutes. (Unlocks and opens doors) I'll have to lie down.—I'll—have—to—(She exits at back to R., whimpering to herself. When she is off, the telephone bell begins to ring. After it has rung for a moment, FARADAY is heard off stage, calling)

FARADAY. (Off stage L.) Celia! Celia! Where are you, Celia? (He appears from the L. and stands in c. doorway, looking off right. His jaw drops) What—is—the—matter—with—your—Aunt? (The telephone bell continues to ring. He hurries down) Here! Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! (SMITH enters and comes down L. of table above chair where CELIA'S coat and bag are. FARADAY sees pen in telephone hooks, jerks it out and throws it on desk and picks up receiver. Bell stops ringing) Hello! Hello! Hello! Faraday Hall. Mr. Faraday speaking.—Tell Miss Faraday what? You've made the reservation on the midnight train, change cars at Cobden?

SMITH. (Sees CELIA'S wraps and bag and starts slightly) Miss Faraday going? (Moves R. above table, thinking)

FARADAY. (Into telephone) Nonsense, man, you mean Mrs. Faraday. At twelve noon, she's leaving, not twelve midnight.—What's that you say?—It was Miss Celia that telephoned and said she was going herself? Nonsense, man! Don't argue with me. I'm afraid you've been drinking, my man. (Smells

*telephone*) The telephone reeks of brandy! Try to be sober by morning. Remember, we need you in this election. (*As he hangs up telephone*) I've only known him to be drunk once before—decent chap and devoted to Celia.

SMITH. (*R. of table*) Every one is, sir. She's peculiarly attractive.

FARADAY. Yes, but it's taken people a long time to find it out. Now, where has Martin put that whiskey? (*He goes fussing about the room*) But the men who want to step into Smith's shoes now are legion. (*Still looking about and fussing. Picks up brandy decanter. Smells it and puts it down*)

SMITH. It's a legion, Sir, I'd like to enlist in at once. Have I your permission?

FARADAY. Of course, you have, my dear fellow, of course you have! (*Crossing R.*) If I can only find that damn whiskey and soda, I will drink good luck to you. (*Rattles door down R. Finds it locked*) What do you suppose that scoundrel Martin has been up to? *Has everybody been drinking to-night?* Come, we'll have to go around through the library. (*Goes up to c. door and exits R. SMITH follows him. As SMITH gets to door, the motor horn toots twice. He pauses and looks back, knowingly, then exits off R. After his exit, horn toots twice. Enter CELIA with box supposed to contain love letters and small box supposed to contain watch and pin. She closes the door and deliberately disregards open doors at back*)

CELIA. (*Keeping her eyes fixed on her box of letters, crosses c. below table*) I'm back, Auntie dear. I wasn't very long, was I? I've got my box of love letters. (*Holds out box and looks at it ruefully*) Well, they will go into the furnace with my own hands. (*Places box right of her on table*) And his watch and his pin, infamous things, he'll have those back and a letter with them, that I hope will burn without going into the furnace. (*CELIA goes to*

*desk and takes up a piece of paper as if to write*)  
Tell me, dear. Did Wilson telephone?

SMITH. *(Who has appeared at back from R.)*  
Yes, Miss Faraday, he did. *(CELIA drops the paper from her hand, turns slowly around, sees open doors, walks deliberately to screen and looks over it, her back to the audience. She turns around, her face expressing chagrin and annoyance at AUNT IDA'S failing her)* Mayn't I come into the room and speak to you?

CELIA. Certainly not. *(Goes and viciously seizes her coat from chair and begins to put it on)*

SMITH. *(Coming into the room just the same and coming down above her on the R.)* You told me, I know, there was nothing more to say but good-bye and I'll say that too, if I must. But first, there is something else to say and I'd much rather *say* it than *write* it.

CELIA. No, whatever you do, don't write—don't write me anything. I dislike letters intensely and just at present they seem to be a drug on the market. *(Picks up her bag and veil)*

SMITH. But there is something I *must* say to you before you go.

CELIA. How do you know I'm going anywhere?

SMITH. *(Looks down at her bag and smiles)* Well? *(CELIA swings bag to other side of her)* Besides, I overheard Wilson's message.

CELIA. Oh, you did. Well, then perhaps you will be good enough to realize that I'm in something of a hurry. You will find your jewelry there on the desk.

SMITH. Won't you sit down for five minutes?

*(Ready horn.)*

CELIA. Certainly not.

SMITH. Just five!

CELIA. No.

SMITH. If you don't, upon my word, I shall begin to believe that you are afraid of me.

CELIA. (*Sits quickly with her back to the audience, L. of table*) Indeed! That wouldn't be your first mistake, you know.

SMITH. I know it was a foolish trick. I had no right to come here as I did.

CELIA. It was a cruel joke.

SMITH. (*Simply and feelingly*) Yes, but a joke that is more on me now than it ever was on you. (*Motor horn toots three times. CELIA turns her head in the direction of the conservatory*) I want you to know that my name really is Vavasour.

CELIA. You astonish me. Isn't it anything else too?

SMITH. Yes, it's really J. N. Smith too.

CELIA. Oh! Is that all?

SMITH. No more. Now that I have come in to my Uncle Vavasour's old Abbey, I have to take his name legally, Smith-Vavasour, don't you see?

CELIA. I see. What a delightful combination of class and mass! This may be all very interesting to anyone interested, but really I haven't time now to split hairs over a middle name. Your intention was to deceive me, and you almost succeeded. Failure alone, I take it, accounts for your present humility. Now, if you will be good enough to get your watch on the desk, you will see that the five minutes you asked for are up and, since you insist on saying good-bye to me, will you say it as quickly as possible, please, and let me go? (*Makes no attempt to move*)

SMITH. No. Not until we've decided what's to be done about your other letters. (*Hand unconsciously rests on the box of letters without his knowing it*)

CELIA. (*Glances at this and tries to appear unconcerned*) What other letters?

SMITH. I have that first one here. (*Pressing his hand over his heart*) But—all the others. Good God! (*Moving well down R.*) When I think of love letters of yours wandering loose about Somaliland—(*CELIA places her bag quickly on table, steals her arm*)

*across, seizes the box of letters while SMITH is not looking and on the word Somaliland, swings away from him, hiding the box awkwardly under her cloak*) There's one thing I can do to show you what I feel about it. Give me some clue to the mistaken addresses you must have put upon them and I'll start back to-morrow and fetch them. (*Comes L. C. quite close to CELIA*)

CELIA. From Somaliland?

SMITH. From *Hell*, if necessary.

CELIA. Fortunately, such a journey would be superfluous.

SMITH. What do you mean?

CELIA. I mean that all of those hundreds and hundreds of letters that I was fool enough to write to an imaginary hero are all here in this box. And now they're going into the furnace with my own hands. (*Starts for door, swinging the box in her right hand*)

SMITH. (*Following her and playfully taking the box from her*) Won't you give them to me instead?

CELIA. (*Turns back and they both hold on to box*) Certainly not. It's an additional insult that you should even suggest such a thing. Do you suppose I ever want to see you or hear your name again—a man who has dared to hold me up to ridicule as you have done—to wickedly and cruelly amuse himself at my expense—(*SMITH gives a low laugh*) Oh, don't you suppose I know how funny I must have seemed to you? Ha! Ha! (*Imitates SMITH's laugh*) Silly idiot of a girl, tired of having no notice taken of her, tired of being kept on the shelf, just dying to show people how attractive she could be—only give her the chance. And to think because of that, I made such an everlasting fool of myself before a man, a man who is capable of—

SMITH. Capable of telling you a lie, Miss Faraday? (*Puts box of letters on table*)

*(Ready motor horn.)*

CELIA. Well, you did. You know you did. You did everything you could think of to deceive me.

SMITH. I can't deny it.

CELIA. And do you believe that a man or a woman could ever bring himself or herself to respect or have anything to do with a man or a woman who—who deceived?

SMITH. I do believe it. And judging by my own case, I may say, I know it.

CELIA. I don't think it is very generous of you to allude to me in that manner.

SMITH. Me. We are discussing me, Miss Faraday. What can I say to induce you to forgive me?

CELIA. Nothing. *(SMITH turns away. She glances at him. In an indifferent tone)* But, of course, you may say it, if you wish.

SMITH. *(Turns and comes to her. Tenderly)* I *did* lie to you elaborately, and I'm going to be jolly glad that I had the chance of lying to you, and I want all the rest of my life the chance of telling you the truth. These few hours with you have made me want so very much for more like them, made me want a chance to seem less odious in your eyes, at least to be on a fair footing, so that I may take my chances with the rest.

CELIA. *(Looking straight into his eyes)* But they haven't any chance at all.

*(SMITH laughs a little and CELIA, realizing her "break," turns her head away in confusion.)*

SMITH. Well, that's good news. Then give me a chance alone, won't you? You've only known me for four hours, but am I wrong in believing that you've been thinking of me for eight months? Can't I hope to take the place of the man to whom you gave my name?



(CELIA smiles and looks down a little wistfully, as if about to consent. Motor horn toots three times.)

CELIA. (Throwing off her yielding mood, turns and goes to the winged arm-chair, back to audience, shaking out her veil and pointing L.) Oh, no, it's all too impossible. Besides, Mr. Raleigh is waiting for me in the motor.

SMITH. (Comes to her and gently takes her right hand) You've been dreaming for eight months of an ideal that you never thought to see. I've been dreaming all my life in exactly the same way and at last I've seen mine.

CELIA. (After a pause, during which she lets her hand rest in his, her head averted) Yes, but it's too late now, because I'm leaving here immediately. Mr. Raleigh is waiting to take me to the station. (SMITH pulls her gently across and down stage a few steps. She goes quite willingly) Will you please let me go?

SMITH. (Still holding her hands) You shall go. I shall let you go. The instant you tell me to whom you are speaking—Celia.

CELIA. Really, this is an outrage. Will you kindly let me go, Colonel Smith?

SMITH. He can't. You remember you killed him of wounds at Berbera.

CELIA. Well, Colonel Vavasour, will you please let me go?

SMITH. He can't. The lawyers haven't finished making him.

CELIA. (After a pause, while she slowly breaks into a laugh) Oh, very well then—Wobbles.

(SMITH releases her hand and she hurries to door R. and opens it.)

SMITH. Please don't go. Come into the next room and talk things over.

*(Auto horn toots impatiently off R.)*

CELIA. No, no, I can't. There's Mr. Raleigh. He's come up to the door. Good-bye.

SMITH. *(After a pause)* Good-bye?

CELIA. Yes, good-bye. *(Goes to door and looks off down stairs)* Why, here he is coming up the steps. Martin's letting him in. *(SMITH turns and goes slowly up stage to C. Putting on her veil)* No wonder he's impatient. He's been waiting for me for twenty minutes.

SMITH. *(In door-way)* Yes, but remember I've been waiting for you for twenty years. *(Exits, off L. C.)*

*(Warn curtain.)*

*(CELIA pauses a moment and then crosses up as if to call him back looking over her shoulder to see that RALEIGH is not coming. She goes off stage C. and looks after SMITH and then with a sigh, comes back into room, goes to L. of table, tying her veil as she comes down. RALEIGH enters. He's very cold. His nose is red, his coat collar turned up and he is chattering. Comes to R. C. a little up stage.)*

RALEIGH. Miss Faraday, I had to come in. I'm nearly frozen—you'll miss your train. I've been waiting for you for *twenty minutes*. *(He offers her his arm. CELIA picks up her bag, crosses to him, takes his arm and they walk quickly to the door. He is above her. He smiles, contentedly as they start to exit. As they get to the door, she swings him right out and turns back, going up and off C. again, looking after SMITH. RALEIGH returns and stands by door)* Aren't you coming?

CELIA. *(Comes down to him and, as she reaches winged chair, she suddenly drops her bag in the seat)*

*of it and throws back her head with a joyous laugh)*  
No, I've changed my mind. I'm going to stay, because *he's* been waiting for me for twenty years. (*Runs gayly up and off after SMITH, waving her hand to RALEIGH as she goes. RALEIGH drops his hat in amazement, with a smothered, "Well, I'll be——"*)

QUICK CURTAIN.















